■ Entertainment
The good old days of comedy
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Rumsfeld OKd coercive grilling
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UCPB plans sale of oil mills to CIIF
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Mga dapat/hang nabiktima ng BI: Bakit inabuso!

GMA inauguration could be in Visayas

By Homer P Burgos jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Manila, Iloilo, or Cebu?

Like customers trained to accommodate queues, President Macapagal-...

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

GMA lead over 1M, Namfrel count shows

By Cynthia D. Balana and Blanche S. Rivera

THE SUPPORTER battleship of the opposition in Central Luzon turned pro-administration yesterday afternoon and joined the Visayas in helping President Macapagal-Arroyo widen her lead over actor Fernando Poe Jr.

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Namfrel: No proof of massive cheating

Opposition groups join forces vs poll fraud

By Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño

A MAN whose loyalty has been questioned by some opposition leaders has joined forces with them to denounce alleged cases of fraud in the recent presidential election.

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson yesterday said his representation would meet with the camps of rival presidential candidates Fernando Poe Jr., Raul Roco and evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva to coordinate their efforts against further fraud in the counting of votes.

The group had agreed before the elections to unify their counter-cheating effort fraud.

Lacson said his representative would go to the Commission on Elections today to question the poll body's alleged decision to replace its personnel involved in the vote tabulation in several cities and provinces where opposition candidates were reportedly doing well.

Quoting "reports from his watchers in the field, Lacson said election officers in Quezon City, Quezon province and Western Visayas were replaced on Wednesday and Thursday by personnel from the Comelec central office.

"The orders supposedly came from the central office of the Comelec," Lacson said. "Those who refused at such a crucial time in the counting," Lacson said.

The opposition senator also cited a case of attempted vote-shaving in Basilan, saying Mr. Macapagal's home province of Pampanga.

He claimed he received 8,000 votes in one area, but an election official tried to make it appear that he got only 600 votes, by removing the last zero in the figure.

The attempt, foiled by an opposition

Fraud may be local, says JoeCon

By Philip C. Tubeza

THEY MAY cry to the heavens that they had been cheated but the country's poll watchdog insists it has seen no evidence of massive fraud in favor President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May 10 elections.

One senior official of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) even warned media against being taken for a ride by some politicians.

"I do not see any sign of massive cheating. The shouting is probably local," said Namfrel chair Joaquin Cunanan.

"I do not see a deliberate attempt by any political party to institutionalize massive cheating at the presidential level," Cunanan told the Inquirer.

Uniting (Nacionalista) Alliance spokesman Ed Panlilio (ex-JoeFort), all election results were tampered with, really deliberate. That I do not see now."

Cunanan was reacting to allegations by Mr Macapagal's rivals—actor Fernando Poe Jr., former Education Secretary Raul Roco, Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson and evangelist Eddie Villanueva—that the elections were marred by widespread cheating and vote-rigging.

Namfrel secretary general Guillermo Luz for the opposition for claiming there was massive cheating in the May 10 elections and then offering a reward to anyone who could present evidence of fraud.

"Why would you make such a statement when you do not have the data or information? You're in fact offering money for people to give you data. But how can you trust the data if you're offering money?" Luz asked.

"How do you know the person is just crooked giving the data or just wants to get your money?

Luz said the media should ignore politicians who claim that there was massive cheating but who cannot provide concrete proof.

"Don't give any being taken for a ride," Luz said.

If these politicians could not provide evidence of cheating, they "should exercise more responsibility and not try to sow confusion and chaos," he said.

"This is not fair to the people. A lot of people were out to vote. I think they deserve better behavior from politicians making dirges allegations without proof," he said.

ELEKSYON 2004

NAMFREL TALLY

PRESIDENT	
1 MACAPAGAL, Gloria	3,961,241
2 POE, Fernando Jr.	3,150,262
3 LACSON, Panfilo	910,143
4 VILLANUEVA, Eduardo	106,954
5 ROCO, Raul	89,307
VICE PRESIDENT	
1 DE CASTRO, Noli	4,47[illegible]
2 TEODORO, Loren	3,498,[illegible]
3 AQUINO, Herminio	388,[illegible]
4 PALO, Pastrilla	7,[illegible]
SENATORS	
1 BIAZON, Rey	3,476,286
2 BOCKLIN, Bong	4,249,771
3 GORDON, Richard	3,199,455
4 PANGILINAN, Kiko	3,660,641
5 MADRIGAL, Sonny	3,513,859
6 CAYETANO, Pia	3,441,554
7 SANTIAGO, Miriam	2,927,388
8 LAPID, Lito	3,387,712
9 JALOSJOS, Romeo	3,208,[illegible]
10 BARGAS, Rodolfo	3,[illegible]
11 ENRILE, Juan Ponce	3,[illegible]
12 ESTRADA, Jinggoy	3,[illegible]
13 MACEDA, Ernesto	3,[illegible]
14 MAGSAYSAY, Mitos	3,[illegible]
15 OPLE, Leticia	3,[illegible]
16 PADILLA, Robert	3,[illegible]
17 PIMENTEL, Nene	3,[illegible]
18 SARMIENTO, Ernesto	3,[illegible]
19 SOTTO, Vicente	3,[illegible]
20 TIANGCO, Ramon	2,[illegible]

COMELEC TALLY

SENATORS	VOTE
1 LIM, Alfredo	87,543
2 BOCKLIN, Bong	38,480
3 BIAZON, Rey	38,063
4 PIMENTEL, Nene	38,541
5 ENRILE, Juan Ponce	39,817
6 ESTRADA, Jinggoy	43,338
7 MACEDA, Ernesto	38,989
8 SANTIAGO, Miriam	38,637
9 LAPID, Lito	49,176
10 GORDON, Richard	43,646
11 BIAZON, Rodolfo	43,328
12 EJERCITO, John Henry	43,301
13 BARBERS, Robert	40,987
14 MADRIGAL, Sonny	40,213
15 CAYETANO, Pia	38,838

SLOW DAY: Namfrel chair Joe Concepcion walks past a reading th Presidential election returns come in trickles at the Namfrel center at the La Salle auditorium.

Why Namfrel quick count is slow

By Cynthia D. Balana and Philip C. Tubeza

THE MEDIA, media and human error are slowing down what is supposed to be a quick count by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Namfrel chair Joe Concepcion Jr. said he would expect Namfrel to finish the count by Tuesday, or a full week after it began its quick count.

But Concepcion said the count would most likely be finished on Thursday when the poll watchdog would have counted 16 percent of the total number of precincts.

"Accuracy is more important than speed," said Concepcion, who visited the headquarters of the tabulating group.

Namfrel has been experiencing glitches ever with the computer transmittal with the transmission process.

The group has employed a new short message service (SMS)-based transmission program for election tallies from precincts nationwide.

Under the scheme, 300,000 volunteers nationwide were to send to the main headquarters text messages containing the tallies of election precincts using eight downloadable templates with one corresponding verification code.

Concepcion said, Namfrel secretary general Luz could volunteers were doing to get through in less than seven minutes. But there were instances when texting

Poll results show return to one-party dominance

By Armando Doronila

ANALYSIS

ALTHOUGH THE latest partial unofficial election results tabulated by Namfrel, showing President Macapagal-Arroyo maintaining her lead over Fernando Poe Jr., account for returns from only 16.05 percent of the country's precincts, at least two profiles are forming up.

The first is that as more results arrive at the Namfrel tabulation center from both administration and KNP opposition bailiwicks, Ms. Macapagal's 4.4 coalition keeps on pulling ahead.

The second, and more significant, development is that the results are flashing signals for a return to a one-party hegemony in the mold of the dominance of the Nacionalista Party from the 1930s to 1946 before the NPs monopoly on power was broken with the split in the Liberal Party.

Manuel A. Roxas, won the 1946 presidential election over Sergio Osmeña. From that split emerged the two-party system that prevailed until Ferdinand Marcos dismantled the system with the

Irish volunteer salutes RP teachers

By Tarsee Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—And now we pause for a break—a good word about the conduct of the elections, from foreigners.

Helen Mitchell, a 42-year-old Irish volunteer from Dublin, assisted schoolteachers on the job and came away "very, very impressed."

Mitchell said she helped double-check data encoded from the sixth copy of the election returns and update the "big tally board of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) in Barangay, and did other chores during the 24-hour unofficial quick count operations on 11 Thursday.

At the Metropolitan Cathedral's sensitive-turned-Namfrel headquarters, Mitchell went about her tasks quietly, never complaining of the long hours, according to fellow volunteers from the archdiocese's Social Action Center of Pampanga (Sacop). But she complimented the schoolteachers in turn.

"The elections required hard work and I can here dedicated the teachers were. I went out the other day to some of the different areas just to see how much the teachers were exposed to work. I found some of them

NAMFREL volunteer Helen Mitchell from Ireland is very much impressed with the dedication of Filipino teachers on poll duty.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Scattered showers and thundershowers will prevail in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao today due to the southwest monsoon and the intertropical convergence zone.

German eyed in Boracay slays

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
INQ Visayas Bureau

KALIBO CITY—Police are investigating a possible link between a German man and five Filipino construction workers who had been tagged as suspects in the killing of three foreigners and a Filipino on Boracay Island two weeks ago.

Supt. Ordoñelo Magsipoc, officer in charge of the Malay provincial police office, said robbery was still being eyed as the motive for the killings and they were still gathering evidence to firm up their case against the suspects.

Police questioned the German, identified by Magsipoc as Uwe Fritzel, after his shoe prints matched a blood-caked set of prints found near a bathroom on the second floor of the mansion where the bodies were found.

Magsipoc said Fritzel, 37, who failed a polygraph test taken days after the murders were discovered on May 3.

Fritzel was an aide of slain German businessman Anton Steinthuisen, the owner of the three-story mansion known as Dolce Vita which Fritzel had reportedly helped build, Magsipoc said.

Steinthuisen, 66, and his guests—Swiss Manfred Schwarz and Britons John James Greenfthwaite—and his Filipino housemaid Jenny Sumbeiro were found dead with multiple stab wounds in different rooms of the mansion located in a secluded hilly area of Sitio Bulabog in Balabag village.

Police investigators said Danish Higgs, a friend and neighbor of Steinthuisen's, found the bodies after the victim's wife Josephine, who was in Manila, asked him to check on her husband who failed to answer her phone calls.

Higgs peeked through a window of the mansion and saw Steinthuisen's bloodied body on the floor of the servants' quarters on the ground floor.

Fritzel accompanied the first group of policemen they arrived in Dolce Vita after the bodies were discovered and it was he who identified the two foreign guests, Magsipoc said. The police official said Fritzel had helped Steinthuisen during the construction of the mansion.

Fritzel has denied involvement in the crime. He said he frequently visited the house, which would explain how his footprints got there. The prints may also have been left in the time he entered the bedroom of the house, Fritzel told investigators.

But policemen who were in the first group that went to the crime scene said Fritzel said the German did not go into the room where the three prints were found, Magsipoc said.

Fritzel was released after questioning but is under police surveillance at least two members of the Bantayan Special Protection Unit (BSPU).

Magsipoc said they had yet to compare Fritzel's and the five construction workers' fingerprints with prints taken from a bloodstained white bag found in a routine search the mansion.

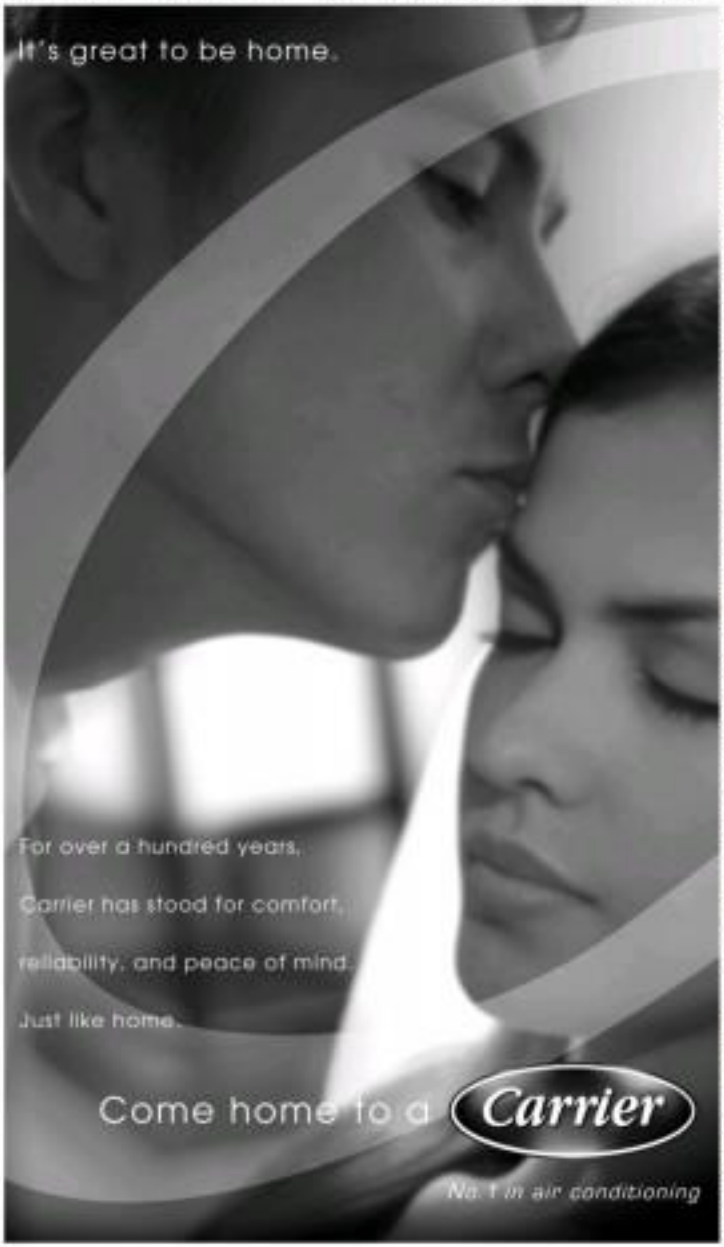
The five construction workers were released earlier after the police failed to file charges against them. They were part of a group of 20 construction workers who had been landscaping and building a swimming pool on the grounds of Dolce Vita and were the first suspects in the crime.

Chief Supt. George Allen, Western Visayas police director, said the five workers were being closely monitored and had been asked not to leave the island resort.

Allen said the victims' families had offered a P100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the killers.

Investigators continued to maintain that robbery was the motive for the killings. They said personal effects belonging to the victims were missing and were believed to have been taken by the killers.

These included Greenfthwaite's Giorgio Armani leather belt, electronic organizer, Nokia mobile phone, wallet and credit cards. Also missing were Schwarz's tape recorder, digital camera, wallet, mobile phone and HKD6,000 in cash, they said.



Military counts heads to thwart poll fraud

By Christine F. Esguerra

THE ARMED forces of the Philippines yesterday admitted it was conducting a "head count" of all officers in the wake of reports that retired military officials were recruiting active members for a destabilization plot.

"We're purposely looking for our executives we're not cool alert," Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military information officer, said in Filipino. "We need 100 percent troop strength."

This after retired police generals had reportedly joined their former comrades in the AFP to recruit active police and military field commanders for a federal plot to thwart in the election count in favor of the opposition.

Led by a former Philippine National Police chief, the retired generals had been going around Cabletizan (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), Mimaropa (Occidental and Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan) and Mindanao offering huge sums of money to active police and military officers to join the camp of Fernando Poe Jr., a top police general told the Inquirer yesterday.

Among the recruiters, the officer said, was a retired PNP provincial director, an AFP officer was implicated in the Oakwood mutiny which tried to overthrow the Macapagal administration last year.

The retired general tried to recruit a provincial director from Region 4 who in turn told the PNP-Intelligence.

"Pero ka ng sa amin (Come to our side)," the provincial director quoted the general as saying. The retired general did not specify the amount offered, but hinted that it was "very huge."

Another PNP general described the actions of these retired military officials as a "last-ditch effort" to salvage a victory for Poe who was trailing President Macapagal-Arroyo in the latest unofficial count by the National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections.

"They will not succeed in stealing re-win," the official told the Inquirer.

The source said he had received the documentation of all incidents involving the opposition's alleged bribery of active police and military officers.

Several provincial directors were set to arrive at Camp Crame to issue affidavits.

"We will release these (pieces of) evidence soon to show the public that the opposition had been involved in election fraud," he said. "They're actually the ones cheating, not the police or the military."

The government had identified former AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Jonifer Sarmiento and Army commanding general Jaime de los Santos as among the retired military officials involved in the alleged conspiracy.

Or he Santos denied the allegation, claiming he and some 200 retired officers had been going around Mindanao simply to urge field commanders to respect all forms of election fraud.

Palace to consumers: Just grin and bear latest oil price hike

By Cliff C. Celmacruz Jr. and Abigail L. Po

All MORE oil firms raised the prices of their petroleum products yesterday. Malacañang appealed to the commuting public to bear with the higher costs, saying it was unavoidable in view of soaring crude oil prices in the world market.

"We are asking for some understanding on this matter because this is brought about by the increases in the price of world oil," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

On Saturday, Caltex Philippines Inc. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. increased by P1 the prices of all their fuel products, including liquefied petroleum gas. Yesterday, other oil players followed suit.

Increase unavoidable

"The Department of Energy has done everything to delay the impact of rising crude oil prices with its continuous dialogues with the oil industry players. I think the P1 increase is unavoidable because of the world market conditions," Bunye said in an interview over DZRB radio.

Total Philippines Corp. yesterday increased the prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene by P1 per liter and of LPG by P1 per kilogram.

Eastern Petroleum Corp. and Phoenix Fuels implemented similar increases yesterday.

Now oil players Petrol Petroleum Corp. and United Oil Mgt. of Cooperative will announce at the same level of increase for its gasoline, diesel and kerosene at 9 a.m. today.

Petron Corp., the country's top gas oil firm, has yet to announce its own price adjustments.

The P1 increase was the tenth price hike this year.

The oil companies said they had to raise their pump prices after Dubai crude surged to a 13-year high of $38.39 per barrel due to the intensifying violence in Iraq, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' reduction on subsidies set out to cut the oil supply, and the surging global demand for oil specifically in the US which is keen on boosting its reserves.

Pitch Malacañang now declining that an oil price hike was unavoidable since oil prices had shown no sign of falling, transport fares and the prices of basic commodities are expected to increase.

Reward for oil firms

But a militant group accused that the oil price hike was President Macapagal-Arroyo's reward to the oil companies for supporting her during the last election.

Crispin Beltran, Anakpawis national party chair, said Shell, Caltex and Petron have closely been embroidered to pick up their graces when they came because of the support they had given the President in the elections.

"Now, they are collecting the favor and making the public pay," Beltran said in a statement.

During the campaign period, President Macapagal had successfully bashed oil moves by transport groups and farm and basic goods producers to raise fares and local prices in the face of increasing oil prices.

Not temporary

The President had said then that the rise in world oil prices was temporary and that would go down with the passing of storms that wreaked havoc by hoisting fuel.

As of May 12, prices of unleaded gasoline and diesel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for finished petroleum soared to incredible dizzy averages of $46.75 and $45.10 per barrel, respectively.

The benchmark Dubai crude, which local oil refineries use as a basis in price threat spreads, also surged to a 13-year high of $35.19 per barrel on May 13.

An industry source said there would be another oil price hike in the first week of June to enable oil firms to recoup the losses they had been shouldering three past months due to high international prices and the weak peso.

Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association chief Fernando Ortiz said he's not unaware of a price hike of as much as P2.00 per liter for gasoline and P2.74 per liter for diesel, as these represented the local oil firms' underrecoveries three past months. With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Phil Stucken and Lucen Bordey

Rising cooking oil prices pose problem

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's "kitchenomics" is expected to be put to the test as she grapples with the soaring prices of cooking oil sued by households, sidewalk food vendors and restaurants.

But Cabinet is sharply divided over a proposal to cut import duties on palm oil, a cheap alternative to coconut oil, that would directly benefit end-users but could jeopardize the fledgling palm oil plantations in Mindanao.

The Philippine Coconut Authority has endorsed a proposal by the Coconut Oil Refiners Association (Core) to suspend the 20-percent duty imposed on palm oil which cooking oil manufacturers can use to replace crude coconut oil whose prices have jumped sharply in the world market.

In a letter to the President, Core president Jesus L. Jacinto said that palm oil could be brought for $250 to $300 a hogshead (barrel) and refined coconut oil for the world market. The savings would immediately be reflected in the price of edible oil in the market, he said.

Arroyo proposed that coconut oil should instead be exported to generate additional foreign exchange earnings for the country will E. Gobaco report. Jr

They survived lahar, 'slides only to meet with disaster in Iraq

By Tonnie Orejas
IEN Central Luzon Desk

MATEO (left) and Ronald Dizon

DAVID

MABALACAT, Pampanga—Rationed Mateo and Ronald Dizon survived Mt. Pinatubo's wrath in 1991.

But as was now long where the two were from Barrio Pampanga, found work. Both died, 28, were his death on May 11 during terrorist attack on a US military camp. The 38-year-old Dizon, exposed by media just the moment shots were fired, is actually alive but may be permanently maimed, according to a younger brother.

Their homebase was swamps by lahar in the 1991 eruptions and was completely buried by landslides the huge the same of 1995.

The resulting large-scale displacement forced the families of Mateo, originally from Barangay Tenejero, and Dizon, of San Nicolas, to move from one evacuation center to another. In 1997, the government relocated them to a resettlement area in Mabalacat, some 40 km northwest of Manila.

'If it's your time'

"I used to stop him from going to Iraq because I knew the situation there was dangerous, with the ongoing war. But we never really recovered from the lahar disaster, and my son had dreams for us, and for himself. So he left anyway," Mateo's mother, Carolina, told the Inquirer. "His comrade was, whatever you say, you'll die if it's your time."

In their home on 23rd Street in Mabalacat, Carolina sat waiting for official confirmation of the arrival of her son's remains. She was expecting the body yesterday or, at the latest, today. Raymund says the reversal in her mood of fear.

Attracted by the good pay that he felt he would never earn as an electrician in the Philippines, and told that many other townmates were already making good money in Iraq, Raymund had left with high hopes. "He was determined to do well," Carolina said.

In the five months since December last year that he worked at the American military Camp Anaconda, Raymund sent a contribution and had returned.

"He was real to whole salary back to us. 'I'm mother's needs,' he said. 'I am aside part of it as his savings, and the rest was spent on the family's day-to-day needs. He was a big helper."

Carolina said Ronald's employment agency was providing $2,000 for the funeral and burial services, but that the had yet to hear from the government.

Another breadwinner

Like Ronald, Dizon, the third of 11 children, was the family's breadwinner.

"Dahil sa mapera (Attracting individuals) ang Iraq ang hanapbuhay many of our siblings," said Ronald's brother, Orlando.

Conflicting reports on Dizon's condition after last Tuesday's mishap have caused anguish to his family.

Dy Antonio Jr. Minister Mercado, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration regional director, said with Orlando Cristobal the news of Ronald's death, Mercado presented a May 13 memorandum confirming that Ronald had been killed in action.

But Orlando told Mercado that the family was in touch with Allen Turon, a translator and co-worker who assured them that Ronald was incapacitating at a hospital in Baghdad.

He's alive

Mercado decided to defer meeting with Ronald's mother for two days and asked Ms. Luz Talavera, Filipino welfare officer in Kuwait, to double-check the latest report.

"Confirmed na (today) ang (he's alive)," Orlando told the Inquirer while attending to his brother who is dying of dengue.

Orlando has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to help his injured brother come home. He said Ronald, who worked for 20 years in Saudi Arabia previously, had assured the long wait to let his last overseas job.

"He called frequently, assuring me that he was safe because they were with the Americans," Orlando said. "But I always reminded him to be careful just the same. Now that this has happened, we really want him back."

Namfrel: No proof of massive cheating

Paragraph #1

Lao said that while Namfrel had not noticed any signs of massive cheating at the precinct level, the canvassing in the municipal and provincial levels was "a different matter."

"So far, we see no patterns of cheating right now ... but the municipal level is a different matter altogether," he said.

However, Lao said Namfrel could check the cheating at the municipal and provincial levels because it had copies of election returns.

Compare copies

Politicians complaining of cheating could compare their numbers with those of Namfrel, he added.

"If there's massive cheating, let them prove it. There's been violation of ballot-snatching, but there was no deliberate attempt to cheat. It's not systematic. There is no pattern," he said.

He said class exists the opposition had copies of election results, they should protest claiming the meaningful or provincial canvassing if they noticed discrepancies.

"That's the challenge that Tito really giving them. They have a copy of the election returns. They have a ballot copy from us," Concepcion said.

"They should tabulate and, as the independent provincial board of canvassers, they should intervene. (If they see discrepancies) and contradict the results," he added.

Poe's claim

Asked about claims by Poe's camp that the latter was winning based on its independent feedbacks, such as Pulso ng Bayan Inc.'s exit poll showing that Ms Macapagal was managing Poe in that region, [See story on Page A12.]

The Namfrel count had Macapagal with 648,906 as of yesterday afternoon's tally compared to Poe's 190,209.

In one point in the interview, Concepcion seemed to rue his situation. "This is the worst election I have been in," he said.

Asked how he could say there was no evidence of massive cheating in the face of resistance claims by the opposition, the Namfrel chair said: "The problem is the matter of people who were disenfranchised."

The Social Weather Stations polling outfit had estimated that 900,000 people were unable to vote because of a foul-up in the voters' list.

Taisad's charge

In Maguindanao, residents reacted sharply to statements by senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad alleging that no elections were held in at least five towns.

In Datu Hung town, Johnny Yu, a former vice mayor, said Tatad should first "validate the credibility of his sources, because we have observed treacherous people, including the Chinese community here, here for him."

Tatad had claimed that no elections were held in the Maguindanao towns of Datu Blah Sinsuat, Mamasapano, Datu Unsay, Ampatuan, Datu Piang, Datu Abdullah Sangki and Datu Piang.

Apparently to explain Poe's poor showing in some areas, Steve Brao, the provincial administrator, said nobody really campaigned for Poe and his slate in the Cordillera region.

Raoul Mokhtarbhai, chair of the board of election inspectors, said he did not see any watchers working for Poe's Koalisyon ng Naghahangad ng Pilipino party in areas where he performed poll duties.

The Kadamayan Foundation Inc. based from also issued a statement this morning reports attributed to it that no elections were held in the said municipalities. The IBP in the local 9/10 colleges and foreign poll observers who came here.

While screening the polls on May 10, the boyscout spotted former Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello III and his wife Digna casting their votes at 9:30 a.m. at the Jose Abikar Ampatuan Elementary School.

The provincial board of canvassers has proclaimed Datumanong the winner in Maguindanao's second district congressional race. *With reports from Noah B. Mandinio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NAMFREL chair Jose Concepcion checks some documents while waiting for election results from the provinces for the poll watchdog's quick count. AFP/RAMON

Opposition groups join forces vs poll fraud

Paragraph #1

lawyer at the scene, could have cost him 3,427 votes, Lacson said.

"Imagine how many votes he lose many more areas did this kind of irregularity take place?" he said.

Lacson said he had also told his lawyers, (an ad hoc) presidential and vice presidential committee organized during the votes until the counting of the last ballot.

Earlier last week, Sen. Edgardo Angara's, who chairs the executive committee of the Koalisyon ng Naghahangad ng Pilipino, raised questions about Lacson's loyalty to the opposition forces.

Angara had told reporters that Lacson's decision to accept Ms Macapagal's offer of nonpartisan watchers could undermine the opposition's claim that there is an arrangement and a deal struck between him and the administration.

Not conceded

Lacson had said that despite his acceptance of Ms Macapagal's reconciliation offer, he has not conceded the election to the President.

None of Ms Macapagal's opponents had conceded defeat despite an unofficial vote count as of 1 p.m. yesterday showing the President leading her closest rival, Fernando Poe Jr., by about 1 million votes. [See story on Page A12.]

For, Many of the Aquinos ng Pag-asa and Villanueva of Bangon Pilipinas had all cried foul in the election and in the vote counting.

But two of Namfrel, I learned executives are from the parties were hiring. I looked for the tips whether there were indications that the early election returns were being reported along party lines.

Although the returns in the first two days of counting showed a march and go battle for the lead between Ms Macapagal and Poe, two things became increasingly clear as the tabulation progressed. First, Ms Macapagal's lead was building up and victories bring her prospects of winning a larger than marginal plurality over Poe, her closest rival. Second, is her lead was increasing in the 6:4 party versus was changing up.

The results were showing that Ms Macapagal was not only increasing her lead, but winning more, Sen. de Castro, has also been critiquing his edge over KNP's Loren Legarda. More significantly, the 8-4 senatorial line-up has shown strength by carrying eight of its candidates over the winning column. As of yesterday's Namfrel results, K-4's Manuel Roxas II, Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., Richard Gordon, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Pia Cayetano, Manuel "Lito" Lapid, Juan Ponce Enrile and Robert Barbers were winning.

Those results—while not yet complete—clearly showed the electorate voted along party lines. From president, vice president to the senatorial and district slate, the K-4 coalition appeared to be sweeping the election. The initial returns seemed to show that the Macapagal was riding the party candidates and that party was also riding her and all of its candidates.

Partial returns from the congressional, gubernatorial and mayoral races strengthen the profile of a K-4 sweep at the local level.

Departure from past

The initial results foreshadow a departure from the outcomes of the two presidential elections in the past. Marcos declared only that he was only "restoring democracy" a monopoly of power by a single party—the KBL (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan).

In the 1992 elections, Fidel Ramos, with his newly formed National Union of Christian Democrats (NUCD), won the presidency with 24 percent of the vote but Joseph Estrada who was running under a different party won in vice president. In 1998, Estrada won the presidency with 39 percent of the vote, but Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who ran under a different party won as vice president with more votes than Estrada.

Estrada' party didn't capture a majority of seats in the House of Representatives, and Estrada's coalition didn't establish commanding majorities in either the Senate and the House.

If the trend favoring the K-4 coalitions holds until official results are determined, we seem to be entering a period of the reforming of the party system, returning not to the two-party system prior to martial law but moving toward one dominant party with the K-4 coalition as its orbit.

The outstanding feature of the 2004 presidential election is that two candidates occupy the high-est post of the land. In the last months of the campaign, however, it became a two-horse race between Ms Macapagal and Poe. Even so, the possibility of moving back to a two-party political set-up has been foreclosed by the partial election results that demonstrate a strong party line voting for the president, vice president, senatorial candidates and local officials. New and why requires further examination.

New dynamic

For there can be no denying the trend that we are entering a period of a reformation of the party system that may trend away from the relished multiparty system mandated by the 1987 Constitution. What's changing up is that the new political dynamic is democratic election is that an identical redrawing of the political map is taking place defined by a strong and irresistible party dominating both the executive and legislative branches.

Without conceding that the KNP and Poe had lost the election, Sen. Edgardo Angara told me in an interview on Friday that his reading of the results so far indicated a strong likelihood of a weak opposition party over whelmingly a dominant administration party.

Angara is the architect of the KNP coalition that put together his 8-20 the largest components of KNP the PDP-Laban of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., and the Partido ng Bisaang Pilipino of ousted President Joseph Estrada. Difficult by those political groups to present a single presidential candidate collapsed when compatibles between Poe and and Sen. Panfilo Lacson failed.

In the face of the apparent defeat of KNP, Angara is trying to read the signs for their long-term implications for politics defined by institutional parties and processes. So soon he fears the emergence of a one-party hegemony or a laid-thing for democracy.

Wrong man

According to Angara, his efforts to build the KNP as a coalition was motivated by his desire to develop a strong party system, the the problem with majorities of late is that he tried to build his concept on the wrong man.

Poe has no appreciation for institutions building. Angara's concept was destroyed by fact because it was ill-suited for the candidate he promoted for the KNP. He believed he would win the presidency only through sheer popularity and charisma, without a strong party and a political platform.

Angara tried to give a semblance of democratic process to his "road show" that entered the KNP convention and the "caucus" process. The process failed to forge a consensus inside his creature, the KNP, and succeeded only in elbowing out Lacson from the opposition's selection and in disrupting the oil within the opposition.

The KNP's campaign was the opposite of Angara's concept of conducting a campaign on the basis of party and issues. But the campaign was hijacked by close Poe associates who built on a personalist approach, contradicting Angara's concept.

The personalistic approach continued with the strategy of the K-4 campaign, which emphasized unity, performance and organization and party teamwork. Angara faces the herculean task of rebuilding the opposition into a credible opposition movement from the ruins of its 2004 debacle. The fatal collision of these two antagonistic concepts was responsible for the KNP's defeat.

Irish volunteer salutes RP teachers

Paragraph #1

had been on duty round the clock. It was a record for them, moreover, really," said Mitchell.

Almost 20,000 public schoolteachers were briefed in Pampanga's 5,400 precincts as chairpersons or members of the board of election inspectors. Their work on election day began at 6 a.m., from the preliminaries to the actual voting, and on to the counting, preparation of the certificates of votes, and the delivery of the COPA to the municipal board of canvassers.

Duty first

For the exhausting and risky job, the teachers were entitled to a P1,000-daily allowance. "Some in Pangilinan, an elementary schoolteacher for the last 25 years, said that if the money were delayed, she could still find some. But in the last that they would they named for her additional points in government service.

Mitchell said the Man of Pangilinan deserved a salute.

As a foreigner, she added, she had merely taken an active interest of the trail in her ex-workers at home, where she or other second year as volunteer. She works with the comet's technical support division, preparing reports, writing press releases and giving briefings on development issues in the province.

"If there's some way to be useful, I'm happy to work alongside them the more pas-

of hands and an extra pair of feet is always useful," Mitchell said.

She said many Irish missionaries had graveyard swayyyyes on the need "to help out here." During the martial law years in the 1980s, she was involved with an Irish Filipinos support group. The London-based Association Lay Volunteer is located her in Bang.

Polls in Ireland

Elections in Ireland and the Philippines are different in many ways, Mitchell noted. In instance, she said, there were no quick counts in Ireland, but independent observers were also invited.

"Political parties are fined a lot of money if justice are seen after the elections. Huge incentives are given to everybody to take down the posters and clean up," she added.

Most notably, Mitchell observed, Ireland's party system is "stronger ... and there are we are many similarities with the same family names."

Still, she praised the hard work and dedication of the "ordinary people" in the past election. (More than 6,000 volunteers will be needed in Pampanga on 10. Tim Guiang, provincial chair of the citizen's unit, reported.)

"They devoted a huge amount of time and energy to help make sure the elections were fair," Mitchell said. "I hope they get a leader that they deserve."

Poll results show return to one-party dominance

Paragraph #1

declaration of martial law in 1972.

From the first day of the tabulation by several quick counts, including the Namfrel, I learned executives to know how the parties were hiring. I looked for the tips whether there were indications that the early election returns were being reported along party lines.

Although the returns in the first two days of counting showed a march and go battle for the lead between Ms Macapagal and Poe, two things became increasingly clear as the tabulation progressed. First, Ms Macapagal's lead was building up and victories bring her prospects of winning a larger than marginal plurality over Poe, her closest rival. Second, is her lead was increasing in the 6:4 party versus was changing up.

The results were showing that Ms Macapagal was not only increasing her lead, but winning more, Sen. de Castro, has also been critiquing his edge over KNP's Loren Legarda. More significantly, the 8-4 senatorial line-up has shown strength by carrying eight of its candidates over the

Document Viewer

Priests blamed for poll deaths

DATU PAGLAS, Maguindanao—A mayoral bet yesterday blamed Catholic priests for the violent incident in the town of Columbio in Sultan Kudarat where four persons were killed during a shootout.

Columbio mayoral bet Mohammad Paglas said the Catholic priests' involvement in the town's election worsened the situation in the area.

"They started the trouble. They refused to give in to the order of the Comelec. The priests headed the human barricade...," Paglas said.

Paglas said had it not been for the priests and the groups behind them, the bloody transfer of two ballot boxes from the town hall to the provincial capitol in Sultan Kudarat could have been avoided.

Some supporters of Paglas (son of incumbent Mayor Edwin Sarmiento) as reported earlier) died during a shootout while the ballot boxes were being transported on Saturday afternoon.

Five of Paglas' supporters were also wounded. —Jaffrey M. Tejico, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Stanley Ho may have visited anew

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Southeast Asian casino mogul Stanley Ho reportedly met and held talks with officials of the state-owned Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. at the Heritage Hotel in Manila on Friday.

He, accompanied by several of his business associates, flew in through Clark International Airport in Santiago on May 13, just three days after the national elections.

A source at the Air Transportation Office's flight services center at the Subic Bay Freeport confirmed that a Challenger 60 jet, code named "P-Blue"—which fit the description of Ho's private plane—landed there at 1:38 p.m. It was not known, however, if the casino magnate was among its passengers.

An Inquirer source at the freeport said a "delegation of Chinese businessmen from Hong Kong" was "hosted" by the Subic International Hotel (SIH).

The source could not say if the men indeed met with the group but admitted seeing an older man who looked like the 81 year-old gambling tycoon.

The source clarified that the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority was not involved in any visit by the SIMA Chan Pelicias Paraiso could not be reached for confirmation, however.

Mike Wilson, the hotel general manager, replied "NO" when asked if the SIH had hosted Ho or a group of Chinese businessmen from Hong Kong on Thursday night up to early Friday.

In his visit to Clark, Pampanga, last March 20 to receive an honorary degree from the Angeles University Foundation, Ho hinted of his plan to revive the Jumbo Palace, a floating casino docked near the Manila Bay reclamation area which was cited adrift to operate due to strong opposition from he Catholic Church.

The Clark visit, which took only eight hours, fueled speculations that Ho had concentrated in the campaign efforts of President Macapagal Arroyo in exchange for a deal to operate several casinos in the Philippines.

The March visit appeared to have been known to the Palace, with no less than this Inquirer, Ho's personal assistant for foreign investments," at Ho's hotel in Clark.

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OFWS in Iraq having second thoughts

MANY OF the overseas Filipino workers who originally wanted to flee Iraq after the killing of two compatriots in separate execution attacks are now having second thoughts about leaving, Ambassador Roy Cimatu said Saturday.

Cimatu, head of the special Iraq Team, said he had prepared for the transport of 94 Filipinos who have since asked to be evacuated from Iraq after the latest killing of a Filipino in an attack on a United Nations camp there. (See story on Page A-2.)

The group was to be flown to Dubai and from there they were to proceed on home to Manila.

Change of heart

"Originally, many had signified that they wanted to resign but in the days were on, it seemed they were having a change of heart. Some backed out and withdrew their resignation papers," Cimatu said in a local television interview by long distance telephone from Iraq.

Cimatu said he was not certain how many workers still wanted to leave but he knew that a second batch of about 100 had been scheduled to depart Iraq although some were also having second thoughts.

He said the government was not forcing anyone to leave despite the risks, reiterating that "we support whatever is their decision."

2 dead

President Macapagal-Arroyo had said Friday that the government would help repatriate up to 600 workers wanting to leave Iraq after a mortar attack on Camp Anaconda, a US base, earlier this month left one Filipino dead and four injured. Several weeks ago, a Filipino truck driver was killed when the convoy he was in was attacked by rebel-led forces on highway linking Iraq and Kuwait.

The Philippines has suspended the deployment of overseas workers to Iraq but officials conceded there were ways the Filipinos could circumvent the ban.

Cimatu said the repatriation of the workers would be shouldered by the contractor that hired them.

He said the team was checking other locations in Iraq where it might be able to resume deploying Filipino workers.

Television reports said that Filipinos in Camp Anaconda area fed safer because security measures had been stepped up there.

An estimated 3,000 Filipino civilians are working in Iraq, most of them employed in US and coalition camps.

A small contingent of 45 Filipino soldiers and eight police aides is based with a multinational force in the town of Hilla in central Iraq. AFP

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Why Namfrel quick count is slow

From page A1

Look up to 10 minutes

In the first three days, the count slowed down to two runs of the long-distance text messaging, resulting in tedious searches.

While the delay in the transmission of ballots using mobile phones, Namfrel decided to use the Internet in a "fallback position." The volunteers also said their tallies by fax.

Mas-exade errors

Namfrel's information technology personnel said one of the reasons for the delay in the posting of tallies in La Salle and the release of Namfrel's tallies was the fact that the planned master list provided by the Commission on Elections did not match those sent to Namfrel and to the municipal counting centers.

"The causal problem... because we couldn't apply select 2001 voter registration. We had to make down a list to conform to the tallied problems," Augusto Lagman, Namfrel science director, said.

The transmission of tallies using a format different from the templates used in the watchdog's quick count headquarters also contributed to the delay.

Comelec-on said this was the reason most of the results from the strongholds of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. and his running mate, Loren Legarda, in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog were not yet included in the national tally.

The tallies from the two regions were submitted in a format different from the one used at Lo Salle, thus the Namfrel computers could not read them.

"When they come in raster templates, we convert them to Excel," Concepcion said.

First in, first out

He denied when Namfrel was "stranding" just because the computers were not able to enroll process the tallies from President Macapagal Arroyo's fortresses in the Visayas.

"It's first in, first out basis. We do not do stranding here," he said, adding that he welcomed a Comelec investigation of the Namfrel system.

Also striking that technical difficulties that initially delayed its "quick count," Namfrel's unofficial tally is now being logged down by a "surprising" number of votes in the election returns (ERs) it is receiving from precincts around the country.

Last said the Namfrel quick count had tallied results from only one-fourth of all the precincts in the country due to discrepancies and missing information in the ERs Namfrel was getting.

Pilit Class problems, Namfrel has to re-check the data in the "random" election returns with the Comelec or with the board of election inspectors (BEI) that prepared the defective ERs, Last said.

'Dagdag-bawas'

Last noted that due to Namfrel's stringent checks, it discovered that a successful candidate lost, in an apparent case of dagdag-bawas (vote-padding and shaving), around 9,000 votes from the two boards.

As of 7 p.m. yesterday, Namfrel had tallied the election results from 56,026 precincts or 27.13 percent of the 219,382 precincts nationwide.

"What I see is a problem with BE preparation. I'm also not surprised at the extent of the incomplete information in the ERs copies with in the number of voters who voted," Last said.

He said the incidence of discrepancies and missing information appeared to be higher now than when Namfrel encountered in the last general election in 1998.

Asked if these problems were deliberately committed, Last said: "I don't know. I can't say that I or the time."

He said Namfrel would later come out with an "inventory" of election returns with discrepancies. The report would show the number of the subsets of BE discrepancies by province and by region.

Control numbers

Last admitted that Namfrel's quick count for the year was slower compared to its count during the 2001 elections. He said Namfrel tallied the results from 70 percent of precincts nationwide 12 days after the election in 2001.

Last explained that in screening ERs, Namfrel volunteers were looking at three control numbers: the precinct number (PN), the number of registered voters (RV), and the number of voters who actually voted (VV).

He said the usual problems that Namfrel encountered were missing PN or incidents where the number of votes was bigger than the VV or the number of registered voters who voted.

If the total number of votes for either the presidential or vice presidential candidates is higher than the VV, Namfrel sets aside the election return. "There is no sense in putting garbage into the system," Last said.

If the PN or VV is missing or incorrect, Namfrel checks with Comelec or the BEI. "It's double-bot it takes time," he said.

Last said the discrepancies in the election results occurred because the workers might have been too tired to double check the numbers they had written down after working for several hours.

He noted that on Saturday, Namfrel got 704 election returns from Malabon, Metro Manila, but the group did not use 138 of these returns because they had to be reviewed due to discrepancies.

Last said the dismissal statement had told Jill Poe said a successful candidate had asked Namfrel to check the number of his votes from the said line.

The provincial certificate of canvass had shown that the candidate had 20,000 votes but the Namfrel tally, based on the ERs from 96% percent of precincts in Davao del Sur, showed that the candidate received 32,000 votes in the province.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, May 17, 2004
9th Week of Easter

1st Reading:
Acts 16:11-15

Gospel:
Jn 15:26-16:4

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Father, I will send you the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, When they'll be gone, he will testify about me. And you, too, will be my witness for you have been with me from the beginning.

"I tell you all this to keep you from stumbling and falling away. They will put you out of the Jewish communities. Still more, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is doing God's will for this because they have not known the Father or me. I tell you all these things now so that when the time comes you may remember that I told you.

"I did not tell you about this in the beginning because I was with you."

COMMENTARY

Cf. Ignatius wrote, "We say a peculiarly the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, of which Jesus Christ is the author/Deity and constant abiding of the Holy Ghost, who is constantly the Comforter of the Church. It is His office to console the hearts of Christ's people, and to be their continual advocate against their adversaries, but still the main part of His work lies in making glad the hearts of the returned, in confirming the weak, and lifting up all those who are bowed down. He does this by revealing Jesus to them.

The Holy Spirit consoles, but Christ is the consolation. If we may use the figure, the Holy Spirit is the Physician, but Jesus is the medicine. The Spirit heals the wound, but it is by applying the holy sacramental Christ's name and grace. If He was to the Comforter, the other is the Comfort. Now, until such [illegible] be consoled by Jesus, who should He CONSOLE but sad and disconsolate? The Holy Spirit has given to every apostle his own office: [illegible] But if they should sin, if they weak and trembling believe, then He will be negligent of His word and fruit? Listen then suppose that He has condemned what He cannot remit? Or will not perform? Or is He supernatural to strengthen them, and to comfort them, lest they suppose He has forgotten His business, or that He is full in the wrong office which He undertakes to do then? Nay, think not so! Behold of the weaker and blessed spirit whose name is the Comforter! He delights to give the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. It comforts us bitter, and He will surely comfort all the house of mourning, to heal the sick, and the weak lags [illegible]

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'Reconciliation would help Ping case'

By Christian V. Esguerra

A CRISIS-ORIENTED group fears the controversial Burgos-Honrado reboot case against losing presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson straddles longer prospect after the senator accepted the offer of reconciliation made by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Fr. Robert Reyes, head of the group Kilusang Bantay Watch, yesterday said it was likely that the Macapagal administration used the case as a bargaining chip to convince Lacson not to withdraw from the presidential race and, later, to join a government of national unity.

"It's very disturbing," Reyes told the Inquirer. "We hope [an administration would not be a stumbling block in the pursuit of justice."

Lacson's refusal to give way to actor Fernando Poe Jr. in the elections prevented the opposition from uniting [illegible] the chances of Ms Macapagal of winning. Despite below poll ratings, Lacson insisted on continuing with his presidential bid.

Lacson's decision to accept the President's offer of reconciliation has fueled speculation that there had been a standing agreement between the two presidential bets even before the campaign period started.

If there was indeed an agreement, Reyes said, a Macapagal victory would pave the way for a government devoid of "consistency in word and deed."

"The people are sick and tired of the administration's maneuvers to buy off the opposition," he said. "If she really wants a fresh mandate, she should behave. Lacson has a case and the government shouldn't stop until justice is served."

Lacson has escaped prosecution in the robbery case that has been hounding him for at least nine years.

While head of an anti-crime task force in 1995, Lacson allegedly led a composite police team that arrested and summarily executed 11 members of the notorious Kuratong Baleleng robbery gang.

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Jalosjos siblings win in Zambo

By Fe B. Zamora

[illegible] brothers and a sister of convicted rapist ex-Rep. Romeo Jalosjos won as city mayor and congressmen in Zamboanga del Norte amid allegations of vote-buying ranging from P600 to P2,000 per voter.

Dominador, Romeo's younger brother and lookalike, won as mayor of Dipolog City. Seven years ago, the mayor also testified in court that it was he, not Romeo, who met with the 11-year-old rape victim at coffee in Dipolog in May 1996.

Cesar won as representative of the 3rd District, while Cecilia Jalosjos Carreon won in the 1st District. Romeo had represented the 1st District until the Supreme Court affirmed his conviction three years ago.

Rosalie Jalosjos, a Jalosjos ally, won in the 2nd District, while Rolando Yebes, another ally, barely outdistanced Exequiel Amoroso in the gubernatorial race.

"They won using the influence of money," said Julian Aldon II, a phone interview Aldon had lost the mayoral race in Dapitan.

"These kinds of allegations must be supported by evidence and so far they have not presented a witness, an affidavit or even paraphernalia of vote buying," said governor-elect Aldon in a phone interview from Dipolog City.

The Jalosjos camp ran under the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Pilipinas. The ticket is headed by National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

The winning candidates were proclaimed Saturday and Sunday.

Aldon, who earlier filed a disqualification case against Dominador with the Comelec, said he would pursue the case because, "I believe he will be disqualified because he was convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude."

He added that Dominador Jalosjos was also convicted of robbery in Cebu in 1989.

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The WORLD

CECIL LAWRENCE B. GARCIA

Rumsfeld approved coercive interrogations, says report

WASHINGTON—US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld approved a secret program that encouraged interrogators methods used at Abu Ghraib prison, where Iraqi prisoners were abused, The New Yorker magazine reported Saturday.

Rumsfeld had approved "a highly secret operation" last year, whereby top-ranked physical coercion and the sexual humiliation of Iraqi prisoners in an effort to get even more intelligence about the growing insurgency in Iraq," New Yorker investigative reporter Seymour Hersh wrote, citing current and former intelligence officials.

Excerpts of Hersh's report have been released ahead of publication in the week.

The Pentagon said Hersh's report was "outlandish, conspiracist, and filled with error and misinformation on many levels."

"No responsible official of the Department of Defense approved any program that could conceivably have been intended to result in such abuses as witnessed in the recent photographs," Defense Department spokesperson Lieutenant Dan Hare said in a statement.

US interrogation techniques have come under scrutiny amid revelations that prisoners at the Abu Ghraib jail outside Baghdad were kept naked, stacked on top of one another, forced to engage in sex acts and photographed in humiliating poses.

Rumsfeld, who has reported calls for some Democrats and a number of major newspapers to resign, insisted on Friday from a separate trip to Iraq and Abu Ghraib prison, telling the world's "body blow" photos added to have damaged it.

The new program authorized roll-ups and late strikes, US global coverage as President George W. Bush orders reduction in blueprint, Bush has backed Rumsfeld and said that abuse was carried out by unrepresentative, wrongful actions of only a few soldiers.

The US military has now established several interrogation methods from being used in Iraq, including deep sand-treasury deprivation and body "stress positions," defense officials said on Friday.

The New Yorker reported that the clandestine defense department operations was known as a "special access program" or SAP.

Its rules were "Grab whom you must. Do what you want," according to one former intelligence official cited by Hersh.

Rumsfeld's decision to expand such techniques into Iraq after their use in Afghanistan, was opposed by members of US intelligence organizations, the report said.

"They said, 'No—way. We signed up for the core program in Afghanistan, pre-approved for operations against high-value terrorist targets, and now you want to send for collections, involved in late, and people pulled off the streets,'" the former intelligence officials told Hersh.

The source said the CIA objected to the program's use inside Abu Ghraib, where a scandal involving the mistreatment of Iraqis has engulfed Democratic calls for Rumsfeld's resignation. The CIA ended its SAP involvement in the jail.

Leaked photos from Abu Ghraib have shown US soldiers abusing Iraqi inmates, forcing them into sexually humiliating positions.

Hersh writes that Rumsfeld left the detailed planning to Pentagon intelligence chief Steve Cambone, but that the program was also jointly supported by Rumsfeld and the chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers.

The Pentagon wanted to use tougher interrogation techniques on the 24 plus to coerce Iraq into a broader campaign of interrogation, Hersh wrote.

"As far as they're concerned, this is a covert operation, and it's to be kept within the defense department chain of command," former intelligence official told Hersh.

Hersh is an award-winning US journalist who broke the story of the 1969 My Lai massacre, when US soldiers executed Vietnamese civilians during the war in Vietnam.

Also Saturday, The New York Times reported that the mistreatment of Iraqi inmates at Camp Cropper, near Baghdad airport, predates those of Abu Ghraib prison by four months.

A protest told The International Committee of the Red Cross that had been beaten by interrogators, bruised, humiliated, threatened with torture and murder, stripped naked and pulled on the hood, forced back and pushed the daily said.

He was also kept awake for four days and had a baseball bat into his mouth with a cord, it added. AFP/Reuters

MINHAZEEN HAQ—Nicholas Berg, of West Chester, Pa., is shown in an undated family photo. A video posted May 11, on an Islamic militant Web site showed the beheading of an American civilian in Iraq, who had identified himself as Berg.

US guards took abuse photos 'for fun'—NYT

WASHINGTON—A US reserve soldier who is being investigated for mistreating Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib jail has told investigators that some of the pictures of detainees mistreating and piled naked were taken for fun, The New York Times reported Sunday, giving reported details of the abuse.

"We thought it looked funny to pictures were taken," the newspaper quotes Private First Class Lynndie Rugland as saying.

Rugland's statement, made May 6, describes abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison and sometimes amusing, but almost never to her mind, our of bounds, according to the report.

She explains how she put a strap around a detainee's neck and forced him and others to run and crawl down a hallway for "apparent, ahhh fun to the beast," how one soldier would regularly throw a football at detainees with Iraqi over their heads "to scare them," how one soldier would kick detainees and make open wounds there "would personally stitch detainees if the wound wasn't too bad" according to a copy of her statement given to The Times.

Asked if she ever physically abused a detainee, Rugland said, "Yes, I stepped on some of them, push them or pull them, but nothing extreme," according to the account.

She described how it "did look funny"

US faces new Afghan prisoner mistreatment charges

KABUL—The US military in Afghanistan has launched its second investigation into prisoner abuse in a week, as the scandal over the treatment of Iraqi detainees threatens to spread.

US spokesperson Lt. Col. Todd Matsunaga told reporters on Saturday that fresh allegations of mistreatment were relayed to the military on Thursday, days after a former detainee said he had been sexually abused in 2003.

"Upon notification, coalition forces launched an immediate investigation into this matter," he said. "Coalition forces are committed to ensuring that all detainees are treated humanely and consistent with international law."

It's added that such allegations do not reflect the military's interests in Afghanistan.

"Our investigators are proud that we are concerned about these things," Matsunaga said. "Our center of gravity is the Afghan people. When allegations like this come to light, they can affect that center of gravity and we take that very seriously."

In a tiny, remote village in the east of the country, the family and friends of one of three Afghans who have died while in US custody expressed anger at American abuses.

"We ask the Americans: Why are you arresting and killing innocent people? We don't know them so you killed," said Roshan, best friend of Dilawar who died in December 2002, at Bagram air base, the main US detention center north of Kabul.

Eighteen months later, the US military has yet to conclude its investigation into the death, which according to experts was caused by "blunt force injuries" to the legs.

Roshan said Dilawar, 22, was accused of being an al-Qaeda supporter, but his brothers said he "hopeful, 160 km northeast of Kabul, that he was a taxi driver.

"We don't want the Americans in our country. They should leave it for us," Roshan added.

There were few details of the latest complaint, except that it was made to the military via a third party and the person in whose was held by Americans last year and later released.

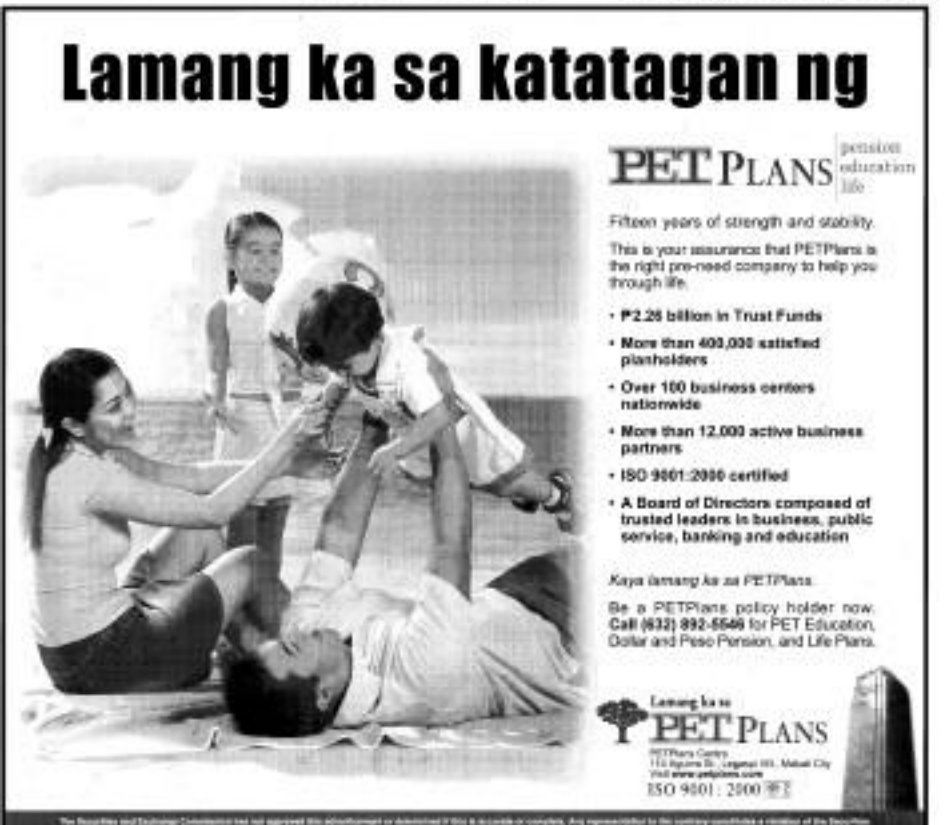
The detainees have launched an investigation into allegations made by former policeman Sayed Nabi Akhbari that he had been subjected to beating, sleep deprivation, torture and sexual abuse during about 40 days in US custody last year.

The complainant, following a prisoner abuse in Iraq that sparked rage across the Arab world, have led to new calls for human rights groups to be given access to Afghan detention centers.

But Mazengarb said that only the International Committee of the Red Cross would be allowed access to Bagram.

"There will be no change in that policy, as we note the ICRC as the sole international organization charged with looking after the rights of persons under control."

Some of the latest serious allegations by detainees in Afghanistan, made since the US waged a war that toppled the Taliban in 2001, concern Asadullah the east, Kandahar in the south and Gardez, south of Kabul. Reuters



Left divided on whether to join Gandhi government

NEW DELHI — India's communists were due to decide on Sunday whether to join the government being formed by prime minister-elect Sonia Gandhi as the Indian born leader looked for allies in the world's largest democracy.

The left-led parties, which won a pivotal 60 plus seats in last week's election upset, are also debating a joint economic policy with an eye to reassuring investors after the rupee and shares crashed to their lowest in months on Friday.

The leftists have already pledged their support to Gandhi, 57, who has unexpectedly brought the country's Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty back to power, but they must now decide whether to formally join her coalition or back it only from outside.

Gandhi's Congress party has secured enough support from its allies almost to guarantee she will be the next prime minister — and India's first foreign-born leader. She will also be the family's fourth prime minister after her late husband, Rajiv, mother-in-law Indira and India's father Jawaharlal Nehru.

Inquiry raising Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his Bharatiya Janata Party, Congress fell short of a majority in the 545-seat parliament and Gandhi is still caught up in frenetic negotiations to settle on the size and shape of her coalition.

So far, the left is divided on whether to formally join Gandhi. some communist groups are in direct opposition to the Congress at the state level.

Gandhi is due to meet coalition allies on Sunday and could make a bid for government with President Abdul Kalam as soon as Monday, newspapers said.

"I thank the people of India from my heart. We have succeeded against all odds, we have prevailed despite all predictions of disaster," she said on Saturday after Congress chose her as its parliamentary chief, effectively anointing her as the next prime minister.

"There is now a momentum generated by our revival, let us not squander it. We must utilize it as a catalyst for change."

Congress, which first put India on the path to reform by ditching its socialist economics a decade ago, has pledged to continue Vajpayee's program of economic modernization, but with "a human face."

Investors fear the leftists will block or slow reforms, especially the sale of bloated, inefficient state firms.

The communists, who have copied Chinese-style reforms in the states they govern, tried to appease markets on Saturday, saying they welcomed foreign investment and realized no country could quarantine itself from the globalized economy any more.

"Foreign investment is welcome, provided that they satisfy three conditions," said Sitaram Yechuri, economic guru of the leading left-in party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

"They must augment the existing productive capacities of the country, they must upgrade technology, and foreign investment must lead to employment generation.

"In a globalized world, no country can remain insulated from foreign capital flow."

Analysts also report Gandhi's government is repackage the reforms after India's hundreds of millions of poor punished Vajpayee and the BJP for failing to pass on the benefits of a booming economy which mainly went to the relatively small urban middle class. Reuters

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Nearing 84, Pope plans new trips

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II prepares to celebrate his 84th birthday on Sunday, buoyed by plans for fresh trips abroad despite years of health setbacks that led to fears his trademark foreign travels were over.

The Pontiff will symbolically blow out the candles on a birthday cake prepared for him by his cook, Sister Germana, and will receive copies of a book of his sermons will be published in several languages to mark the occasion.

But his unwaning zeal that the best prizes for the ailing pope will be his trip on Aug. 5 and 6 to the Swiss capital Bern, where he is due to meet with thousands of young Roman Catholics.

It will be his first travel out of Italy since a visit last September to Slovakia that sparked fears then it would be his last trip abroad. During the trip the Pope was too weak to read out in full any of his speeches and appeared exhausted.

And last October, during celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of his pontificate, senior church figures began talking openly about the possibility of his death. AFP

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British ministers preparing for life without Blair

LONDON — British government ministers have begun to position themselves for a scramble to succeed Tony Blair, amid mounting speculation of Prime Minister Tony Blair leaving office. Blair's deputy said in an interview published last Friday.

The comments by Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott mark the first time a senior member of Blair's team has talked openly about the possibility that the increasingly embattled premier could soon step down.

Prescott had parried a series of questions about Blair's future in his interview with the Times, before saying his years, the newspaper reported in its Saturday edition.

"If I can make one last comment, I think it's time that when places appear to be moving, everyone positions himself for it," Prescott said, in an allusion to the shift of ambitions around current plans.

"What then is the kind of succession, people inevitably do start to position themselves," he explained.

Asked whether this meant senior ministers were preparing themselves for post-Blair life, Prescott was surprisingly frank.

"No, people do talk about it and you get that discussion... every British prime minister goes on media rounds," he said, while insisting that there was no chance of a coup inside the ruling Labour party to remove the premier.

"Tony is not indifferent to the party and everything, but it's entirely his decision, it's his hands," Prescott said.

The comments will add fuel to speculation that Blair, increasingly pressured by events in Iraq and elsewhere, could either step down or be deposed by his principal Labour rival, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown.

Blair's popularity has slumped since he took Britain into the US-led war in Iraq, reinforcing widespread public skepticism with the argument that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction—none of which were subsequently found—posed an immediate threat to the West.

Continued unrest in Iraq, a scandal over the alleged abuse of Iraqi prisoners and other woes said in a TV interview a referendum on the proposed new European Union constitution have also hit Blair. AFP

GUNNING FOR THE TITLE
Maribel Arguelle, Miss Nicaragua Universe 2004, poses in her swimsuit, May 14 in Quito, Ecuador. Quinceañera will compete June 1 for the title of Miss Universe 2004. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

Long M. Korea talks

BEIJING — China put a brave face on six-way talks aimed at solving the North Korean nuclear crisis on Saturday but said much work remained to be done. North Korea, the United States, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia agreed to more working-level discussions and a third round of full-fledged six-party talks by the end of June, but little else when their three days of second-tier discussions in Beijing ended on Friday. The North Korean foreign ministry said a majority of the talks had supported Pyongyang's "reward for freeze" proposal to resolve the standoff. Reuters

Israel hits Gaza targets

GAZA — Israeli missiles hit two buildings in Gaza on Sunday, destroying an office of Fatah and with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah group and another of a pro-Hamas newspaper after a week of heavy Gaza violence. Residents also inside the offices of either building of the blow of the air strike. The last attack rescued several bystanders on the ground below. In shooting two children and three were wounded in reports of casualties in the second strike. Israel has stepped up Gaza Strip operations since Palestinian militants killed 13 soldiers last week in heavy fighting in the area, dealing the worst blow to the Middle East's mightiest army in two years. Reuters

Mugabe wants to retire

HARARE — Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe gave a strong indication on Saturday he planned to retire when his term ends in 2008 and said he expected a capable successor would be found. It was the second time this year that Mugabe, 80, a proven anti-imperialist from Britain in 1980, has suggested he will not seek another term when his current six-year mandate ends. Mugabe began his current term in 2002 despite protests from the opposition and Western governments that he had won re-election fraudulently. He has subsequently won the face of a collapsing economy, a financial exchange, travel sanctions and regional criticism of his key opponents, ruled of independence from Britain in 1980 as a model African democrat, he has been accused by Western powers of being a tyrant who has destroyed his once-rich country and driven many Reuters

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Concede

EDITORIAL

THE PUBLIC interest requires the last nine three presidential candidates to concede—now, today, not tomorrow, not the week after. They have stood for office; now they should stand down. They should continue their protest-the-ballot campaign, they should by all means continue to prepare the groundwork they need to file electoral fraud cases, but they should immediately come to terms with the inevitable. They did not win the election. Even if the conditions on May 10 had been ideal, they could not have won.

By conceding, they will dramatically lower the political temperature—without necessarily lessening the political pressure on the Commission on Elections. By conceding, they will allow the country to begin putting last week's elections in perspective—without necessarily giving up the fight for electoral reform. By conceding, they will give Filipinos an example in political maturity—and prove in the process that public service does not require winning public office.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, evangelist Eddie Villanueva and former Secretary Raul Roco may not have won the election, but that does not necessarily make them political losers. Lacson, a former Philippine National Police chief whose life story was made into a movie, and Villanueva, a charismatic preacher with a talent for organization, ran very strong campaigns. They have the potential to be dominant political players in the next six years. Roco, a popular former senator whose silence on national issues last year cost his campaign dearly, and whose medical emergency last month shocked the nation with intimations of mortality, ran a noble campaign. It inspired many of the young, who glimpsed dignity amid the cheapness of politics.

But it is up to Lacson, Villanueva and Roco to define their victory. If they continue to refuse to concede, they run the risk of embittering an already anxious electorate, and causing the people to lose on them and on the political process itself. Nobody likes sore winners.

As it is, Villanueva is running the most risk. A few days after the elections, he made an astonishing claim: He said he was running 10 million votes. How he arrived at this conclusion, based on what evidence, he did not say. And then on Saturday he upped the ante: "I would like to tell all that Brother Eddie will not concede until it becomes clear what is truly the will of the people."

For those who do not accept the science behind the better surveys, the final shape of the will of the people may not yet be clear. But at least this much is: Villanueva did not win the election. Like other candidates, many of his supporters were disenfranchised by the Comelec's unpardonable incompetence, deliberate or otherwise. And the votes of many, again like those of other candidates, may have been misounted. But will his "missing" votes add up to 10 million? Impossible. The science of statistics and the laws of probability may not win us any Jim Barnes, but they give us a pretty good idea of how things work here on earth.

Roco too has adopted an uncharacteristic pose. "We cannot concede because there is no winner, and it is unclear as to who is the (real) winner," he told the Inquirer. It is clear to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, it is clear to those who have common sense, that Roco is the real winner. To argue that one cannot concede because there is no one to concede to is legalistic nitpicking at its worst.

Instead of repairing to private life, as he has intimated, Roco should build up his Aksyon Demokratiko network; he should work to make it vital enough to survive the loss of two elections, and strong enough not to depend on elections to do the work of reform in the first place.

It is only Lacson who seems at peace. He certainly has not conceded yet, and his supporters, on his express instructions, remain vigilant in protecting their votes. But he has refused to add fuel to the post-election fire. His campaign rhetoric sound optimistic about his chances, but now that the campaign is over and the counting is ongoing, he has dropped the inflammatory, incendiary style of campaign speeches.

Would that, for the sake of the nation, the others do the same.

GMA gov't holds record in poll deaths

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE ELECTIONS are over; a full week now, but candidates and their followers are still being killed. The latest: four political followers shot and killed while accompanying ballot boxes in Sultan Kudarat; and a former barangay chair man in Batanes, Abra, gunned down by four men in his house.

The death toll in this year's elections is already the biggest in Philippine history. But the Philippine National Police will insist it considers it an "isolated" incident. Violence is an ordinary occurrence in elections. Of course, assassinations become commonplace as soon as the political season heats up. It is part and parcel of Philippine elections, like prickly heat is part of summer. But that is no reason to castigate the entire national government when supposedly drunk (but human) Ifs is so cheap in Philippine elections. "They (the foreigners) are just not used to incidents in Third World countries," the police said. Hmm. Foreign Secretary Delia Albert lashed out at the foreigners for expressing impolite opinions about the May 10 polling.

"Some international election monitors have chosen to sensationalize certain incidents to try to portray that Filipinos do not know how to carry out elections or try to prove that the elections were not credible," said Albert.

C'mon, Secretary Albert, do not be so quiet. If the high barrow of dead bodies in elections is not sensational to you, it is to foreigners; it is also to most Filipinos in spite of the fact that dead bodies during elections are common place here. How would you feel if it were a member of your family who was killed? Would you then join in the condemnation?

Do not castigate those for being shocked at the violence. They are not used to it even if you, the police and top officials in Malacañang are. After all, it was the Philippine government who invited them to observe our elections. How then they have and are not giving rave reviews, we castigate them.

* * *

If somebody were to announce to the public before an election that your rival would lose, would you like that? Your support ers would probably leave you to beat a path to the door of your rival. That, in a nutshell, is what the polling firms did, and that reason why they have attractive many people.

Of course, if you happened to be among the lucky ones whom the polls forecast would win, you would have nothing but praise for the survey firms. But if you were on the losing end, you would file, either

At the "Deng Pian Live" show on Channel 2, it was plain that many of those who were there wanted no opinion polls to be conducted before the elections because they confuse and unfairly influence the electorate. I felt sorry for poor Victor Bingabon of the Social Weather Stations who patiently bore the stings and arrows shot at him.

Why do you want to predict the outcome of the election? he asked.

"Because it is only in an election where he can tell whether we are right or wrong," he replied. "Previous surveys not only of elections but of many other things. If we prove that we are correct in predicting the results of an election, more companies would hire our services.

"We are not saying that we are always right. Our last Senate incumbent ticket in the previous election. If we are proven wrong, then we are wrong, sorry."

Precisely, Opinion polls can be, and have been, wrong. The most famous instance of opinion polls going wrong were those that predicted Thomas Dewey victory over Harry S. Truman in the US presidential race in 1948. A New York newspaper even headlined "Dewey Pleat" even before the American had finished voting. The polls were wrong, and Truman was photographed showing the erroneous newspaper headline with a laugh.

So isn't it unfair, before the candidates and or the people, to run an (though valid) survey, who is going to win and then even before the people have gone to vote, when the prediction, by the pollsters' own admission, can be wrong? The bandwagon mentality is very strong in the Philippines. Filipinos are superstitious. They always want to be with the winner. And if a polling firm says that the candidate will win and that one will lose, there will be a healing for the predicted winner.

In other words, the pollsters play god by anointing who is going to win with the simple announcement of the results of their polls. They become very powerful. It is no longer the people who choose the officials who would govern them but the pollsters. They are the kingmakers and can influence the future of a nation. Isn't that dangerous?

That is why Congress passed the Fair Elections Act, one of whose provisions is to prohibit the publication of survey results within a certain time frame before an election. Various five other countries have similar laws. But our Supreme Court has ruled the prohibition violates the constitutional guarantee of free expression.

In dissolving the legality of the Oil Deregulation Law, the Supreme Court acknowledged that it (the law) violates the constitutional ban on business cartels and unfair trade, but ruled that in passing the law, it is a "belligerent call" of Congress and the petitioner will not make it unless it does the Fair Elections Act is also a "belligerent call" of Congress, yet the Court struck down one of its provisions.

Note that the law does not prohibit opinion polls. It only prohibits, temporarily, the publication of the results before an election. Candidates and parties can still have the surveys for their own guidance, but they cannot have the results published so as not to influence the electorate. But the Supreme Court said it "violates the freedom of expression." Other countries think otherwise.

Losers

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

OF COURSE, the opposition has to prove its charges of fraud beyond a shadow of doubt. They can't get away from that. In the absence of smoking gun, indirect evidence, or "highly issues," or wholesale disenfranchisement in some areas, the results of the elections to be determined by the Comelec will have to be upheld.

But it isn't true that the burden of proving those elections have been manipulable done, and their manipulation is provable, lies with the opposition. A rule that holds the most consequences for the future of this country, not least the prospects of reconciliation and unity afterwards. Foreign observers have been saying that more than the question of fraud, the question of how to do the business is the crucial one. They are right. As we came has the importance of process been more studied. This is a time of national strife and divisiveness. Any hint of wrongdoing in the selection of the next president can only fuel it.

In fact, the burden of proof does not lie with the opposition but with the government. The chairman of the fight between Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr. merely emphasizes it. One may argue that there was a precedent for this in 1992, when Fidel Ramos and Miriam Defensor Santiago fought tooth and nail in the counting, and despite Santiago's subsequent efforts to question the legitimacy of Ramos' victory the public swiftly accepted it with equanimity.

But there is a critical difference between 1992 and 2004, which bears on the credibility of the election. It is that in 1992, while the dispute between Ramos and Santiago raged, Cory Aquino sat as President. Although she was perceived as being pro-Ramos, she continued to be credible when she said she would let the Comelec and Congress do their work.

That is not so today. Today, while GMA and PGMA are bitterly contesting the results, GMA has sole sit as President, the one person to whom all the officials of government, including those of the Comelec—who owe her their positions to begin with—continue to report to. She cannot be credible when she says she will just let the Comelec and Congress do their work. She cannot be credible when she says she will only use the military and police to keep the peace. That one of the constraints in a feud is also one of the judges, or at a position to influence the judges, or at a position to influence the judges. The question of how he or she becomes so is the crucial one. They are right. As we came has the importance of process been more studied. This is a time of national strife and divisiveness. Any hint of wrongdoing in the selection of the next president can only fuel it.

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That is not so today. Today, while GMA and PGMA are bitterly contesting the results, GMA has sole sit as President, the one person to whom all the officials of government, including those of the Comelec—who owe her their positions to begin with—continue to report to. She cannot be credible when she says she will just let the Comelec and Congress do their work. She cannot be credible when she says she will only use the military and police to keep the peace. That one of the constraints in a feud is also one of the judges, or at a position to influence the judges, or at a position to influence the judges. The question of how he or she becomes so is the crucial one. They are right. As we came has the importance of process been more studied. This is a time of national strife and divisiveness. Any hint of wrongdoing in the selection of the next president can only fuel it.

In fact, the burden of proof does not lie with the opposition but with the government. The chairman of the fight between Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr. merely emphasizes it. One may argue that there was a precedent for this in 1992, when Fidel Ramos and Miriam Defensor Santiago fought tooth and nail in the counting, and despite Santiago's subsequent efforts to question the legitimacy of Ramos' victory the public swiftly accepted it with equanimity.

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Fishing for evidence

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassiman

A REPORT in last Saturday's Inquirer said the Philippine National Police (PNP) is asking Filipinos nationwide everywhere to offering a reward to anyone who can provide "hard evidence" that ex-municipal mayor Fernando Poe Jr., is being robbed of his votes. Moreover, earlier, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, the KNP campaign manager, was quoted as saying that the KNP and its ally, Bangsa Filipino of Bro. Eddie Villanueva, were due to provide evidence of election fraud to Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Vidal. Yesterday, Binay and Senator Loi Estrada spokesperson Luis Bocin had earlier threat to Comelec to enlist Vidal's support in their "anti-fraud" campaign. But the archdiocese confirmed them to provide evidence as it has to stand to be brought as the proper authority. He refused to be used.

* * *

The KNP's offer of a reward for hard evidence of cheating is an admission that the opposition may not have won as much [as] they claim. But how effective will any [be] is a case of standing now and presenting evidence later? What one has to [do] is to [be] vigilant, that means one's [sitting] for it until, so anyone who has [any] thinking in [their] mind that [they] can [get] away [with] it [will] have [no] room to [do] it. Let [the] people [be] the judge.

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* * *

The KNP

What can we do for good public officials?

LETTERS

We MUST start to do for a good, honest, competent and effective public official who finds herself in need of funds to pay for medical needs, having gotten sick doing a fine job for the government?

Hipolito Tonio is said to have spent all her savings on medical expenses, having come close to death "after suffering a stroke and a tumor with cancer and other complications." Due to financial reasons she is "reportedly considering quitting her post" as Presidential Commission on Good Govern. more than (PSI, 5/16/04).

Under her watch, the PCGG has helped substantially in bringing about the following positive results for the people—particularly the concise farmers, the agrarian reform beneficiaries and the tsunami fight victims:

- The Supreme Court's decision of December 2003 finally declaring that the once lost ill-gotten funds public funds, having been "imposed for the benefit of the cocoanut industry and its farmers."
- The Sandiganbayan decision of July 2003 declaring that the UCPB was expropriated by the way funds and is therefore owned by the government "in trust for the benefit of the cocoanut industry and its farmers."
- The 2003 Supreme Court ruling that the Marcos-Tatsa bank account amounting to P56 billion was ill-gotten and therefore should be used for agrarian reform (P56 billion) and the compensation of human rights victims (P10 billion).
- The recent May 2004 Sandiganbayan decision declaring that the 27 percent of San Miguel shares were funded by the cocoanut levy and therefore belong to the cocoanut industry and to farmers.

The people have long hankered for good, honest, competent and effective public officials. We have risen to dash the different departments and agencies of the government. The incoming administration in particular will be ready in need of them.

But would they be encouraged to join the government if, having done a fine job, they would suffer a fate like that of Hipolito Tonio? What can we do for such a good public official?

—ERCILIO SANTOS,
chair, Coconut Industry
Reform Movement,
84 Marikit St.,
Quezon City

Bring 'em home from Iraq now

WE decry the stubborn stand of President Macapagal-Arroyo to keep Filipinos, including a peacekeeping force of 51, in war-torn Iraq.

In of now at least two, Raymund Hatuwhad and Rodrigo Reyes, have died. No one but President Macapagal is to blame for their deaths.

Migrants estimates more than 4,500 overseas Filipino workers working all over Iraq. This figure does not include OFWs who are sent there by companies based in Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The recent months, ranging and bombing runs by Iraqi fighters in our country Filipinos working in US military and military facilities, such as Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq.

When said this Macapagal came to her senses in order to use the bully of her bench like loyalty to US designs on Iraq? She does not need to ask for "an assessment" of the safety of our OFWs there. The two deaths and the other Filipinos injured are testament enough to unconditionally pull out all Filipinos from Iraq and provide them with safer livelihood options in the Philippines. This is the least she can do for the safety of OFWs who are still in war-ravaged Iraq.

A most screaming of OFWs in Iraq and an inordinate dependence loss of OFWs in that country can do nothing for the safety of our kababayans already there, including Filipino soldiers and policemen.

The President should bring them all home immediately.

—CONNIE REYES-MAGBALOT,
chair, Migrante-Party-List,
113-F Kamuning Rd.,
Quezon City

Free health care for the poor in the US

IRAIRA Gutierrez, whose lawyer was the main subject of Conrado de Quiroz' column in the April 23 issue of the Inquirer, must have been so engrossed with his client's degree studies that he failed to inform with how the United States cares—out of the well-being of the poor.

Thus, Gutierrez wrote columnist Dr. Quiroz: "This is a matter with the state medical facilities in the world like where intrusive health insurance you eat no even get a spillover removed."

Because he for a salaried student who is willing to fly back home to Manila this May to get back to my family so the University of the Philippines, instead of opting to stay in New York to find a high-paying job.

And, due to be Quiroz is sacrifice worthy of a free treatment. What are the entitlements in the case of less serious the way?

I don't know much how the state of New York deals with the health problems of the poor. But being a rich and populous state, New York's health program should be similar to California's.

Here in the San Francisco Bay Area, if someone happened not to have health insurance and wanted to have his spillover removed given, he could have gone to a hospital run by the counties of San Francisco or Alameda (in Oakland).

Illegals and TNTs (cage-ng ingo) can go to free health clinics run by La Raza in Oakland, a Latino non-profit organization, without having to fear if any immigration agent is around.

Health insurance is required by California law, depending on a person's or a family's income. Those gainfully employed share in the payments of the insurance with their employers. They have their choice of doctors or health providers (private hospitals). The insurance may cover the entire family.

For the unemployed and the income (income below the poverty level), the plan to run is would be San Francisco General Hospital or Highland Hospital in Oakland.

I might add that low-income families with so many number of children are given rental subsidies by the state of California. And even there is the so-called food stamps (green dove) which could buy basic and essential items, such as rice, bread, milk increase.

Unlike in some countries in Europe where there are free health care plans for their citizens, citizens have different lines. The poor are not totally neglected though.

—RUFA L. GRAPAL
San Francisco Bay Area, USA
bainpart777@aol.com

A movie for Ladaw, not for 'kamikazes'

I QUITE agree with Elliot Anderson (PSI, 5/12/04) about the entertainment created by a museum to idolatrize glorifying the kamikaze pilots who killed and wounded thousands of our allies during the end of World War II. The museum curators were master to leave to honor those pilots.

The movie proper movie should be one based on Hidecaki Ladaw's account (PSI, 5/4/04) of his brother, pro-war soccer great Juan "Johnny" Ladaw, who volunteered for military service at the outbreak of war and served in Bataan, where his unit was wiped out.

It is course like his that should be taught to the present generation, in classrooms and in the media. We are grateful to Ladaw for sharing with the public the inspiring story of a true Filipino patriot.

—EDUARDO LACABA, JR.,
Prado St., Carmelillo,
San Juan, Metro Manila

Unite Filipinos

I AM closely following "Nation" was tied," the cup singing was not here in the United States, where even Fil-Am teams basically made it to the final 12, becoming a source of pride among Filipinos. In the "final four," it was really tough for the remaining Fil-Am, Jasmine Trias, an all Filipino player gave her best in the unflinching eliminees of the evening. The most intimidating judge, Simon Cowell, even told Jasmine that she should prepare each household in her country for the worst. It was his metaphorical way to tone for her; subversive, she was definitely going to be voted out of the competition.

Not only Filipinos in Hawaii, but apparently all Filipinos in the United States, learned Cowell's challenge! Finally, Filipinos here have united and rallied behind Jasmine that she herself was visibly stressed and extremely surprised when it was announced that she was staying as one of the top three finalists.

And last weekend, we were the winners in Filipinos' unity and support for Mentor Pacquiao who heroically knelled it out with his tough Mexicano boxing adversary in Las Vegas.

The Filipinos' all-out support for Jasmine is proof of unity among Filipinos here in the United States. I can hope that the diversities among Filipinos back home as a result of the recent elections would slow-mine to an end and give way to national unity for rebuilding the country.

—DONNA CONAL,
North Lindsay, San Jacinto,
USA, 92583,
mnat123@yahoo.com

Orderly elections in Makati

My daughter and I volunteered for the National Movement for Free Elections. She was assigned to the UMAK complex while I was assigned as the reading center manager at the San Antonio Elementary School in Makati City. My daughter and graduated studies, while I did my share in the election.

I witnessed a very orderly process in the school I was assigned to. I can even commend the poll watchers in the precincts. Most of them acted like civilized people. There was a suspicious amount of them and they worked harmoniously with the board of election inspectors as well as with Smartmatic, PCOS' representatives. The voting was orderly, and so was the counting process.

There were some issues

who could not find their names. But the school staff and volunteers were quick to help them. The teachers and the volunteers just remained clear the students were able to vote and that their individual concerns properly addressed.

I would like to personally thank the parishioners and board of the Sacred Heart Parish in Makati for the technical (Smartmatic) and the moral support of our bishop. Ours was an experience that showed what a strong parish leadership and caring parishioners can achieve.

—ROBERTO VELASCO III,
jojo@thetechs.net

In honor of a former president

THE (BORDADO) Mabuhay Boulevard is one of metro Manila's crowning jewels. However, while traveling along this broad stretch, one would not fail to notice the sad state of its center island, where decaying towering palm trees gaze the eyes of every passing motorist.

Surely both roads with center islands, especially to the metropolis, should be properly maintained and beautified to make them more appealing to passersby.

Thanks.

—PEDRO REYVERO JR.
#727 Tayba St.,
Makati City

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quezon city science high school alumni association inc.

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The Board of Directors of the **Quezon City Science High School Alumni Association, Inc.**, is happy to announce that it is now accepting nominations to the **ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS.**

Deadline for nominations is on June 15, 2004 and Awarding of Plaques of Recognition will be held during the 6th Grand Alumni Homecoming at the Quezon City Science High School Grounds.

The QCSHS **ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** will be given to the following categories:

Community Service	:	For individuals who have rendered outstanding work in the service of local communities, for poor and disadvantaged sectors (women, children, disabled, the elderly, the youth, and indigenous communities) or in areas where government or the private sector is absent or unwilling to provide services.
Government Service	:	For individuals who have rendered outstanding work in the bureaucracy, congress, the judiciary, the military and police, or have been responsible for innovative practices and programs in government consistent with public service values such as accountability, transparency, commitment to democracy, simple living etc.
Science and Technology	:	For individuals who have excelled in either the natural or basic sciences or a logical consequence of the academic training they received from this school through their research publications, teaching, consulting services, or implementation of projects and programs.
Education	:	For individuals who have excelled in the field of education particularly through the teaching profession and other allied activities which have resulted in the transformation of moral values, developing social consciousness of people, or development of technical expertise among students to enhance the formal learning process, distance education installations, formal and non-traditional education or skills development.
Entrepreneurship	:	For individuals who have succeeded in the private sector through their entrepreneurial talent or management skills which have meant the establishment, growth or expansion of business enterprises.
Private Practice of Profession	:	For individuals who have exhibited a high degree of success in the practice of their profession such as those in engineering, medicine, architecture, media among others (may not necessarily be in line with their educational training).
Alumni Overseas	:	For individuals who have decided to pursue careers overseas and in the process have excelled in their fields of endeavors by accomplishing scientific research with regional or global impact or continuously helping the QCSHS in the country through research, teaching, practice of their profession or consultancy services.

For more information, please send email to jamesyap@yahoo.com.ph, reynaldomedina@hotmail.com.ph, amsmedina@hotmail.com.ph

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

FOLK ART
Tourists get a taste of another type of decoration, fun and fads, during the Agaw-an Festival in Sariaya, Quezon. The festival is being held in thanksgiving to the town's patron saint, San Isidro Labrador, for a good harvest.

Storm batters Samar, Leyte; 3 fishers missing

By Joey Gabieta and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Power outages hit most parts of Samar and Leyte islands while three fishermen were reported missing in Leyte as tropical storm "Blas" battered Eastern Visayas and parts of Central Visayas yesterday.

At least 1,500 passengers and 150 private and public vehicles bound for Manila were stranded in the two ports in the towns of Allen, Northern Samar.

Hundreds of passengers of small vessels bound for Leyte, Samar, Bohol and Negros Oriental were also stranded in Cebu's ports.

The three missing fishermen were from the coastal town of Calubyanan in Tanauan, Leyte.

Relagia de la Paz reported to the town police station that her husband Leo, 38, and his two companions, whom she did not identify, were fishing on board a motorized boat at around 2 p.m. Saturday but failed to return.

As of 5 p.m., typhoon Blas's center was located 170 kilometers east-southeast of Catarman, Northern Samar, with maximum sustained winds of 160 kph and gustiness of 195 kph.

It was moving northwest at 17 kph, and expected to hit 250 kilometers east of Infanta, Quezon this afternoon.

Storm Signal No. 3 was in effect over Eastern Samar, Catanduanes, and the Aurora provinces, while Signal No. 2 was raised over Masbate, Burias Island, Albay, Camarines province, Ticao Island, northern Leyte, and Biliran Island.

Signal No. 1 was in effect over Quezon, Rizal, Quirino, Isabela, Southern Leyte, Bohol, northern Cebu, Romblon, Mindoro, Batangas provinces, Agusan del Norte, and Dinagat and Siargao islands.

As of 10 a.m. yesterday, the typhoon was located at 130 km east-northeast of Guiuan, Eastern Samar and was expected to be 110 km southeast of Pinas, Catanduanes this morning.

Joseph Sergio, administrator of the Office of Civil Defense in Eastern Visayas, said 600 passengers, seven boats, 16 light vehicles and 13 trucks were stranded at the Look terminal, while another 800 passengers are bound to 20 boats, 21 light vehicles and 48 trucks failed to leave the Dapdap ferry terminal, both in Allen town.

Sergio said the municipal government provided food to those stranded. Since Saturday night, all local disaster coordinating councils in the region have been activated, he said.

Ralph Villanueva, substation engineer of the National Power Corp. plant in Ormoc City, said the Samar province, Mount City and Bontoc town in Southern Leyte lost electricity as early as 9 a.m. yesterday as rains and winds damaged power lines. With a report from Vish Cimatu-ora.

It's still a long, rough road for women in Benguet politics

By Maurice Malanes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Supporters of women candidates in Benguet are not over-grasping, but they concede that it's still a long, rough road for women in Benguet politics.

Gubernatorial candidate and incumbent Vice Gov. Edna Tabanda should have made history as the first woman governor of Benguet, whose top elected positions had been dominated by a few political families in the past decades. But Tabanda, a former mayor of the capital town of La Trinidad, lost to political neophyte Clarenzo Molintas, a former Cordillera director of the National Irrigation Administration.

In vice governor and former mayor, Tabanda may have done well in social services programs such as promoting microfinancing and instituting feeding programs, day care centers and other "soft" programs, which male politicians tend to gloss over.

Long way

"Voters were apparently convinced by physically visible infrastructures such as the irrigation systems that Molintas helped build when he was NIA regional head," said Manjoie Bulay-an of the Ignotus Foundation, a women's group that helped educate voters in Benguet before the elections. "It's still a long, long way yet for a mainstream politics in Benguet," she said.

But some Benguet voters say irrigation facilities are at least more basic and more important than expensive waiting sheds, particularly in a province where most landlords are rain-fed.

In the remote upland town of Kibungan, two incumbent women councilors retained their seats in the town council. But three other town-level women candidates failed to make it after slugging it out with 10 others vying for the eight member municipal council.

The municipal council should have been a natural career for Bernie Cudiamat and Rita Magli, both retired municipal officials who were engaged in help shape ordinances in the field of education, which are very much needed in the upland town of 17,000 Kankana-eys/Ibaloi.

But for Kibungan, the triumph of incumbents councilors Antonina Bacpa and Susan Bacsay in the town council is part of a new local politics.

Inspired by former President Corazon Aquino, Rosalinda Ab-ab, a housewife and an unschooled moviegoer, ran during the first local elections held after the Marcos era 1986 ouster and won a municipal council seat by landslide.

Making waves

After Ab-ab's win, other women candidates followed in the next elections. Women, however, have failed to rise to the mayoral post in Kibungan.

But in Arak town, reelected Mayor Concepcion Bolos has been making waves.

She has since been involved not only in "soft" programs such as vaccines, health, nutrition and other social welfare services programs.

She also engaged in the fight against liberalized importations of vegetables that now threatens Benguet's multimillion peso industry.

In Baguio City, lawyer Peaky Bondoc is the only woman who won a seat in the city council.

Outgoing Vice Mayor Betty Lourdes Tabanda, the only woman member of the outgoing council and who has in her reelection bid as the post electorate, asked Bondoc to show her competence to survive in politics.

"It is not a question of gender. Just show here that you can do your job," Tabanda told Bondoc.

Tabanda recalled that her male colleagues were a little patronizing and timid to intimidate her. She said they would approve her resolutions simply because she is a woman and they "retired" her.

Tabanda, a lawyer, said that through hard work, she proved her capability and her resolutions were approved based on their merits.

"In fact, the situation was reversed and they (male councilors) were the ones who were intimidated by me," she said. With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Roundup

3 militiamen killed

TUBLAY, Benguet City — Three militiamen in Sto. Niño, Cagayan, an Aeta Negrito, Abra, were shot and killed by suspected communist rebels in separate incidents. Police identified the slain members of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographic Units (CAFGU) in Sto. Niño as Ernesto Mabasi and Dalton Pascual, a third villager. Reports said they were attacked by New People's Army rebels led by Jose Fabelo Limos on May 9. In Abra, police reports said Calipa member Manuel Guayon was shot and killed in his single Tagalbacan in Tineg on May 5. Police are still establishing the motive in Guayon's killing. Fidelanian Calolot and Anita Kim Pareño, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Cop sued for murder

BALIWAG CITY — A policeman is facing murder charges in connection with the gunshooting of a house-painter here. Raizel Ilo and SPO2 Romeo Ilo Rivera, who is at large, was identified by witnesses as the one who shot and killed Rodolfo Bonilla, 38, near a videoke bar on Rizal Avenue on May 1. Police said Bonilla and another companion were drinking when three men in an argument before he was gunned down. Two of the men left in a Mitsubishi Delica van, leaving behind Maureen Rivera, passenger brother of Rivera, who was subsequently arrested by policemen. Police said the van was owned by Police Official Rivera. Elena Chanselle, PDI Bulacan Luzon Bureau

Sorsogon road project

SORSOGON CITY — The Department of Agrarian Reform has started the construction of a P16.4-million farm-to-market road in the boundaries of barangays Rizal, Buenavista and Pangpang here. The project, which is under the DAR Legacy for Reform Communities Project, will be funded by the Asian Development Bank and the local government. It is expected to benefit 1,170 farmers. Rogelio Pandan, DAR provincial regional director for operations, urged the farmers to help in the project's maintenance. Barangay officials whose communities will benefit from the project, namely, Ben Rigod, Expedito Milo in Bonsay, composers of Rigod, Tres Maria and San Antonio, and the San Isidro ABC cluster composed of barangays Buenavista, Pinamanculan, Salvacion and San Isidro. Ernie Lindain Abanilla, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Free housing

SAN PABLO CITY — President Macapagal-Arroyo led the distribution of 50 free housing units to informal dwellers in this city under the Gawad Kalinga Program of the Couples for Christ Laguna chapter. A total of 184 housing units in Barangay San Lucas 2 are targeted to be completed by 104 couples "before the end of the year," according to Jesus Lubo here. Each house costs about P50,000, with each awardee shouldering only the cost of the lot. Rosario B. Pasco, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Garcia surges ahead; Woods 3 shots down

HOUSTON, Texas—PGA announcer roamed from tee to green, Sergio Garcia figured his 5-under 66 should have been a little lower, and his two other foes of the Tour Players Championship a little larger.

Tiger Woods was as valid as a wonder he didn't shoot higher than 70, and that he's only three shots behind.

Garcia hit every green in regulation and missed only one fairway on the TPC at Las Colinas, taking advantage of another fast-order meltdown by Woods to build a two-shot lead over Jerry Kelly.

The 24-year-old Spaniard is closing in well—the Tour's leaders' green since the 12th holes of the second round—but is stuck in difference that now places more out than four shots of the lead.

Asked who was the bigger threat—Woods three behind or Vijay Singh four shots back—Garcia smiled.

"Myself," he said. "If I don't beat myself out there, I think I'll be OK."

Garcia, winless on the PGA Tour the last two years while traveling his curing, was at 11-under 199 for only the second time on the PGA Tour, and Fourth time was his title, he had had the lead going into the final round. He won two of those rounds, the 2001 Buick Classic and the 2002 Spanish Open.

"I feel like I should be feeling by quite a lot more," said Garcia, who missed seven birdie putts inside 20 feet.

Kelly didn't feel comfortable with the driver, but he or Jeter might play Sunday for Garcia's unspoiled 67, putting him in the final group with Garcia. They last played together in the final round of the Masters, where Garcia closed with consecutive bogeys.

Woods didn't feel comfortable with any club in hand on the tee box, and he paid for it.

For the second week in a row, Woods hit a 3-Wood, tried clip every quadrilateral. He lost the lead with a three-putt bogey on the second hole, and had to play hard ...usually from the rough...to stay in range. Woods spent the third seven holes without hitting a fairway or making a birdie.

He was at 6-under 202, tying with Brenden Pappas of South Africa after a 68.

Singh settled for a 68, leaving him in a large group at 203 that included Mark O'Meara (70) and Luke Donald of England. AP

Tarver kayoes Jones, reclaims WBC crown

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—American Tarver reclaimed the World Boxing Council light heavyweight title, avenging an earlier loss with a stunning knockout of fellow American Roy Jones.

The heavily out-inflicted Tarver knocked out Jones after one minute, 45 seconds of the second round of Saturday's scheduled 12-round bout.

"We both threw at the same time and I beat him to the punch," Tarver said. "Right on the button." The confusing Tarver shocked Jones with a powerful overhand left that sent the 35-year-old hellman under the ropes in Tarver's corner. Tarver picked up $2 million for beating the fighter that many considered the best pound-for-pound in the world.

Tarver (32-2, 16 KOs) reclaimed his WBC 175-lb belt he lonely lost to Jones six months ago.

Jones (49-2, 38 KOs) was trying to prove his win over Jeff Harding in 1997.

He claimed his lackluster performance in the same ring in November was the result of having to lose 28 lb to make the 175 lb limit. In the low-class prize-to-last fight, he dropped 12 lb.

On Saturday, a shrunken Jones said he had an excuse.

"I got to rest more. It happens that last some times," he said. "I am having a hard time getting up to fight pace." Jones managed to get to one knee in the count of seven, after getting to his feet, Jones wobbled across the ring and referee Jay Nady waved an end to the fight.

Tarver, 32, wildly ran around the ring to celebrate the victory as fans cheered wild cheers.

"We've got a struggling in the landscape of the light heavyweight division," said lightweight boxing promoter Don King.

"There's a changing of the guard and this is a new era. A new era has begun. Everyone is shocked and amazed at Muhammad Ali would say." It also marked just the second career loss for Jones whose only other defeat came when he was disqualified against Montell Griffin in 1997. He later avenged that defeat. AP

MEW champ draws moment of glory with daughter Taliyha, 2.

Ochoa fires 67, nears first title

FRANKLIN, Tennessee—Lorena Ochoa put herself in position to win the first tournament of her young career—again.

Ochoa shot a 5-under 67 and took a one-stroke lead through three rounds of the inaugural Franklin American Mortgage Championship on Saturday.

She shared a one-stroke lead each Pat Hurst heading into Sunday's final round, a big step toward a victory with a seven-stroke, two-hopeful round. The 2003 rookie of the years, who has 13 top-10 finishes in her short career, is at 12-under 204.

"I try to enjoy myself when you're in contention," Ochoa said.

"I think I'm ready. I'm prepared. I learned a lot from last year and this year, you know, I can't wait for it to happen. I'm going to try to enjoy the moment and let it happen."

Pil-American Beverlay Bolanis trailed by 5 strokes at 209 after shooting a 71.

Four rounds after claiming the third-round lead and finishing second, Ochoa struggled with her putter and wasted shoddy Sunday birdie bogeys on No. 3 and 4.

She then remembered how she had been unnerved, talked with her caddie about reaching the green, better and rebounded with birdies on six of the next nine holes to move into the lead.

"That was the key of my day. Even though I made no birdies on the front nine, then the next hole I birdied, so I didn't get down and didn't have time to get frustrated or angry. That was very important," she said. AP

Jennifer stops Serena's Rome run

ROME—Serena Williams insisted on looking at the bright side of life after yesterday's straight-sets semifinal defeat to Jennifer Capriati at the Rome Masters.

Having to only her fourth tournament since an eight-month layoff following knee surgery, top-seed Williams was denied four meetings Amelie Mauresmo in Sunday's final after losing 6-4, 6-4 to her fellow American.

But having only recently returned to action and with the French Open little more than a week away, Williams feels confident her performances will bend of thunder at the Foro Italico this week.

"Physically, it's more demanding on clay, but I haven't felt tired at all," said the 22-year-old six-time Grand Slam champion, who beat Capriati in the semis here two years ago before winning the trophy. AFP

Federer-Coria dream final

HAMBURG, Germany—The Hamburg Masters has hit drama final on Sunday, Wheat Roger Federer plays Guillermo Coria in the final of the new finals, it'll be between the top two seeds and last two champions.

Federer was typically relaxed about the chance to win his fourth title of the year.

"Everything that happens here is great, especially in the final," he said.

Coria is a perfect 31-0 on clay since the 2003 French Open semifinals, and has won his 26-0 with wins at Barcelona, Acapulco and Monte Carlo. On the backcourt he will record 40 straight clay-court wins by Thomas Muster in 1995.

The Argentine also could become the first man to win back-to-back Hamburg titles since Boris Becker's victories in 1994-95. AP

Jimenez roars to victory

SHANGHAI, China—Miguel Angel Jimenez roared to victory Sunday in the Volvo Open, shooting a two-finishes round of 67 to claim a three-stroke win and $300,000 in prize money.

Jimenez, the newly-crowned Spanish Open champion, also overcame his nerves, "the sandwich..." Jimenez steadily endured a six-stroke gap with third-round leader Jarmo Sandelin, collecting three birdies in the closing holes to finish at 13-under 275 to win the 1,000 title.

"I tried to be very aggressive today," said the 40-year-old Spaniard, who finished the four-consecutive at 14 under. "If I play like this, I can do well today."

Sandelin, who collected six birdies in his two-over 74, including a run of five straight—saw his putter go cold under close skies that day. He bogeyed the first hole after hitting his tee shot into the rough. He then bogeyed the second to remain joining his bogeys in the round to finish three birds with a 70.

Thailand's Prayad Marksaeng started the final from Davis on the 10th hole and finished up five birds. But he was outside to keep up the pressure, bogeying on 13, 14, 16 and 17 to finish third on 14 under with 73 for the round.

It was Jimenez's third win on the European tour this year, placing him in the world top 60. AP

Sosa hits homer No. 549, climbs to 9 in all-time list

SAN DIEGO—Sammy Sosa hit his 549th career home run Saturday night, moving out of a tie with Willie Mays and Mark McGwire and into sole possession of ninth place on the all-time list.

Sosa hit a two-run shot off Adam Eaton into the second deck of the Western Metal Supply Co. Building just beyond the left-field corner at Petco Park with two outs in the fifth. Sosa's 10th homer came on a 2-1 pitch and left Mays, Mark McGwire and Ernie Banks tied for 9th.

Sosa's homer gave the Cubs a 4-2 lead. Jeromy Burnitz added a three-run shot in the fifth inning off Eaton.

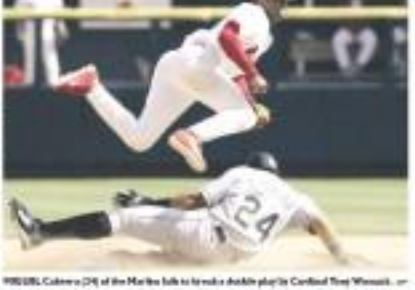
Eaton (0-3) allowed 9 hits and 7 runs in 4 1/3 innings. AP

Carpenter pitches Cardinals past Marlins

ST. LOUIS—Chris Carpenter allowed four hits in 7 1-3 scoreless innings, and the St. Louis Cardinals used a three-run fourth to beat the Florida Marlins, 4-0, on Saturday.

Albert Pujols, Jim Edmonds and Edgar Renteria drove in a run apiece in the six-hitter inning against Eaton. Oliver (2-2), and Mike Stanton also had an RBI.

Carpenter (4-1) beat the Marlins with a batting fireball, continuing his comeback after missing all of last season following shoulder surgery. He struck out five, walked five.


WHERE Cabrera (24) of the Marlins fails to tie make a double play by Cardinal Troy Womack.

ELECTION 2004

Twists, turns in local races

■ BAGUIO found Tan is back as mayor of this, the capital town of Iloilo. He was proclaimed winner Friday morning. Tan previously served two terms as mayor before he was defeated by Rodolfo Mandaue in the 1998 polls. What probably clinched the vote for Tan was how he took up the cudgels for the residents against the infrastructure-poverty purchase adjustment woes.

■ Inc may have garnered a considerable number of votes, but the Commission on Elections disqualified retired Gen. Gregorio Gumilig, who ran for the congressional seat in Lanao del Norte's second district. The Comelec decision came three days after the election. With or without the decision, however, his rival, ombudsman Abdullah Dimaporo, was still declared the winner. The decision to unseat then Gumilig was a reversal even in Makati City where he had stayed most of the time. He has been staying in Barangay Balili in Bagumbayan for only about six months.

■ Luis Raymund Villafuerte Jr. has been proclaimed governor of Camarines Sur. He is a cousin of Rep. Luis R. Villafuerte, who was proclaimed senator and dismissed representative. Others proclaimed representatives were Rolando G. Andaya Jr. (first district), Arnulfo T. Fuentebella, third district, and Rolex S. Alfelor Jr., fourth district, also proclaimed were Mayor Jesse A. Guerrero, Iriga City mayor, and Jesse M. Robredo, Naga City mayor.

■ Juan Ponce "Jack" Enrile Jr., son of Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, won his last and final term as representative of the first district of Cagayan. The young Enrile achieves the last term ambition after outgoing 1st Lt. before according to results of the latest Namfrel quick count, ranks 11 in the senatorial race.

■ Members of other prominent political families in Cagayan, like the Ablan and Ting, also won handsomely. The Ablans, headed by Jeff the dominant political clan in the third congressional district. Benhur Ronie Ting, Manuel Mario Ting appears to beat former Tuguegarao City Mayor Jeffrie Ting for the post. Manuel is bound to take on mayor of then hometown of Tuao. Despite Ting's appearance, his vote is below former Tuguegarao City Mayor Randolph Ting and Michael Ting, appear to be winning in the races for city mayor and councilor respectively.

■ It seems Ronie Ilut is not Surigao City Gov. Domingo "Sonny" Cabacoy, former student of the Catalina squad in the Philippine Basketball Association is leading the the hotel. Ilut would be found himself scraping the barrel of the board member race to locate Ilut's first district. Cabacoy placed 12th of 12 candidates who sited for the posts in the district. As it is, Cabacoy is reaching the same as that of the former playing coach, Sen. Robert Jaworski, who is in danger of losing in the senatorial race.

■ The spouses of two defeated Lake representatives in Bukaan vote in their respective electoral turns. Marlet Bono Mercado, wife of presumed Rep. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado of the 3rd district, who's now mayor of Sagunto town. Former Rep. Ricardo Silverio won in favor of late Rafael more, leaving reelectionist Mayor Jaime Vitus A. Silverio's wife. Satisfaction Rep. Jaime Silverio wins another term as representative of the third district. —With Reports from Lauren Bacungan and Carmel Lagos-Ibañez, Joan Lizandro Jr., PIR Southern Luzon Bureau; Haydee Mirafuente, AP Bay Pilipinas; PIA Mindanao Bureau

DISENFRANCHISED
This man failed to vote on May 10 since his name could not be found in the voters' list. Now, he is signing up to join the protest calling for the Commission on Elections to address the alleged massive disenfranchisement.

Pacificador protests Antique results

By Nestor F. Burgos Jr.
PIA Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Unnamed former independent senator Pacificador Ibañez lost in the vice gubernatorial race in Antique province but he is not about to give up the fight.

Instead, this man, who once ruled politics in the province, has accused his political rivals of robbing him of victory.

Pacificador on Thursday filed a four-page protest before the provincial board of canvassers, claiming that the election victory in three municipalities were "fabricated, manufactured and statistically improbable."

He also asked for a recount of votes in Culasi, Pandan and Belison towns where, he said, he got "undeservedly" few votes.

His protest, however, did not stop the board from proclaiming on Friday incumbent provincial board member Rhodora Cadiao of the Lakas-CMD as the winning vice governor.

At the final Comelec count, Cadiao had 60,107 votes, followed by Eric Orande of the Liberal Party (LP) 47,206 votes. Pacificador finished third with 46,306.

Also proclaimed winners were re-elections Rep. Exequiel Javier, who won over former representative Jovito Plantrose and Nanad Mallares, and re-elections Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez, who won over Robert Contreras.

Pacificador, who ran as an independent candidate, said he received information that votes for him were counted in favor of Cadiao.

In Culasi, Cadiao's hometown, Pacificador got only 701 votes against Cadiao's 10,949 votes. In Pandan town, Cadiao had 7,147 votes while Perez's rather had 984.

"There were so many people that said they voted for me but only 'cadiao' one that I did not get a single vote in their precincts," Pacificador told the reporters in a telephone interview.

Before he received reports of the alleged irregularities, Pacificador said he was ready to concede defeat.

He said on Tuesday night that he would retire from politics and "serve Antiqueños in my private capacity" even if he is acquitted.

An ally of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, Pacificador is facing charges of murder, frustrated murder and attempted murder along with 17 others, in connection with the killing of former Antique Gov. Evelio Javier on Feb. 11, 1986.

Prosecution witnesses have tagged him as the mastermind, a claim that Pacificador has repeatedly denied.

He previously ran for representative and governor in 1998 and 2001, respectively, but lost in his rivals.

But it is not just Pacificador who filed an election protest.

Plantrose filed a separate protest before the board of canvassers, claiming that the tallies of election returns were "manufactured" in the towns of Culasi, Bugasong, Libacao and Valderrama.

Javier, provincial chair of the Lakas-CMD and younger brother of Evelio, denied the allegations.

Poll exec cries foul over vote-selling rap

DALOBAN CITY—Lorm. elections supervisor Juno Bautista Bonte Jr. cried foul over allegations of the opposition that the certificate of canvass (CoC) in Leyte were being sold to favor of the incumbents.

"If indeed their claim was true, how come their legal counsels did not raise any howl or opposition during our canvassing? Everything here is in order. We are not doing anything illegal," he told the media.

He described the charges as "unfair" and "without any basis."

Sec. Edgardo Angara of the Kilusan ng Bagkabansang Pilipino claimed that they had received reports that some CoCs in Leyte were up for sale to ensure the victory of administration candidates, particularly President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ferdinand Balonan, Commission on Elections director for Eastern Visayas, challenged the opposition to present proofs so he could punish those involved in the scam.

A teacher, who served as chair of the board of election inspectors during the May 10 elections, found it sad that the unrewarded teachers were being wrongly accused.

Victor Domingo, presidential assistant for Eastern Visayas, dismissed Angara's claim as a sign of "desperation" in the wake of the President's impending victory.

"We will not resort to any cheating or as they charged, buying the CoCs because that the President will win in this election," he said. Joey A. Benamo, PIA Visayas Bureau

First election protest rocks Igorot town

By Maurice Malanes
PIA Northern Luzon Bureau

BESHIGAN, Benguet—Immediately after entering that he won the mayoral contest in this remote upland town (pop. 18,000), the incumbent and administration candidate here conceded two candidates for a victory from the morning after the May 10 elections.

The two animals, worth P50,000 each, were butchered and boiled in big cans and community folk, mostly tambuneros, gathered at the municipal hall grounds to partake of Mayor Liberato Pastor's once-traditional feast "Mumras."

But the catabred broth was not as tasty to many community hall here after former vice mayor and mayoral contender Beatrice Medo complained that Pastor's victory was rigged with vote padding and vote buying. Pastor denied the allegations.

The complaint was the first ever to take place in this town long known for its clean and honest elections, which until the 1990s were decided by community elders through a consensus.

The Commission on Elections' official tally showed that Pastor garnered 1,999 votes while Medo got 1,968 or a difference of 91 votes. The third candidate, former mayor and provincial board member Albert Mamitiken got 1,672 votes.

Election officials, however, said Medo's protest came late as other protestants of the winning candidates Tuesday night as the elected officials and their supporters feasted on cooked broth.

After the proclamation, Medo can always pursue to contest his election protest, election officials said.

It past elections, the cause "Mumras" served as an opportunity by which candidates could reconcile and hear whatever misunderstanding brought about by the political campaigns.

"The times really are changing," said an elder here, who was saddened by Medo's allegations.

Drought worries Cagayan farmers

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Drought, just "Dagdag-bawas" from cloning and subsistence, is the main worry of farmers in this northeastern province.

"Kahalit ipanis (We have done our job. We have rested already). Our main worry now is the ongoing drought," a farmer said.

Drought has delayed the planting of corn, to Del. The farmers had planned to hold a procession on May 15, the feast day of San Isidro Labrador, their patron saint, to ask for rain.

There is an alarming shortage of pesticides here in three months now because farmers have no pig or cash to avail.

Farmers are discouraged from making plant because of the high cost of seeds and corn. Earnestlan Golden, PIR Northern Luzon Bureau

Priest vows to exhaust all legal means to keep post as mayor

BACOLOD CITY—The Roman Catholic priest who won as mayor of Bugasan, Benguet, despite being on the disqualified by the Commission on Elections, has vowed to exhaust all legal means to keep his post for the next three years.

Citing legal lapses on the part of the Comelec, which he said could send him shot process, Fr. Basilio Cayat said his disqualification was not yet final.

He said he would likewise write a petition before the Supreme Court to insist on his bid to assume him.

"Cayat counts a lot to the people who voted him to office and he will do what to prepare to fulfill his mandates," said Benedict Bato, the priest's lawyer.

Bato said he would ask the Supreme Court to nullify Gozar's disqualification on the grounds of technicality, lack of jurisdiction and jurisprudence.

The Comelec's first division disqualified Cayat after he failed to disclose that he is on probation for an act of larceneous case. Cayat pleaded guilty to the case filed before the municipal trial court here last year.

Cayat, 48, immediately filed a motion to reconsider his disqualification on April 6, 2004, but was denied by the Comelec en banc on May 14, a day before the election.

However, Bato said, Cayat only received a copy of the denial order on May 13, a day after Cayat was already proclaimed mayor-debating over Thomas Fidelino.

Bato said the Comelec en banc simply said Cayat's probation was broken the order denying the motion for reconsideration has not yet become final.

In fact, he said, the denial was anchored on a technical reason, which is Cayat's failure to post the P500 filing fee when he filed the motion for reconsideration.

Hearing filed the Comelec made an error, Bato said the committee should not have required a filing fee since Cayat's motion for reconsideration was out on initial pleading but a move brought before the Comelec en banc to review an order that not yet final filed before the Benguet Comelec office.

In denying the motion for reappearance of filing fee, the Comelec committed "grave abuse of discretion," Bato said. He also said the commission instead elected was more issues that unresolved.

Once, he said, was the failure of the commission to duly serve the summons on Cayat for him to properly answer the petition to disqualify him.

He said a certain Bernardo Daniel received the summons for Cayat sent by telegram but Cayat is not acquainted of Daniel's household.

Bato said that summons in telegram is allowed but it must be served personally to Cayat to show that he received the letter.

"Cayat was improperly summoned and the commission should have contacted us the priest to disqualify him," he said.

Another issue is that the Comelec failed to resolve, Bato said, was Cayat's plea that the disqualification was filed against him be dismissed since it was filed "out of time".

Bato said the petitioner disqualified Cayat was actually a petition to cancel his certificate of candidacy due to alleged "material misrepresentation" after Cayat failed to disclose his criminal record.

"What the petition is material misrepresentation, the action to cancel the certificate of candidacy must be filed not or before Dec. 7, 2004," Bato said, citing Comelec resolution No. 6452.

He said the petition not to disqualify by the person was filed after Dec. 7. Bato said he would be going back to move before the Supreme Court.

Unless they are crushed with finality, Cayat has the right to remain and serve as Bugasan mayor," he said. Editor: Caroline, PIR Northern Luzon Bureau

CLEANUP DRIVE
Army reservists from the First Mixed Cavalry Brigade Reserve Battalion and different organizations lead the clean-up of the city's thoroughfares of election materials.

Police secure Iloilo road project after NPA rebels burn equipment

By Hector P. Burgos Jr.
PIR Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Police have tightened security on a road construction project in Iloilo after suspected communist rebels burned several pieces of heavy equipment worth P1.5 million in Sitio Bolo town on Tuesday.

Chief Supt. George Ibalio, Western Visayas police director, said he had ordered police commanders to beef up security in the area and to conduct frequent patrols to prevent similar incidents.

He also urged companies operating forests from the communist rebels to coordinate and cooperate with the police to ensure their property and projects.

At least eight suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels entered the compound of R.C. de Leon Construction in Barangay Barangay in Cotabato, 29 km south of Iloilo City.

They introduced themselves as government soldiers, according to a report reaching the regional police office.

They detained the six security guards of their 20 cal. pistol and 12-gauge shotgun.

The rebels poured gasoline and burned two asphalt pavers, a payloader and two generator sets worth P15 million.

The construction firm is undertaking the repair of the national road from Bolo to Antique.

The rebels told the security guards that they burned the equipment because they were punishing the firm for not paying "revolutionary taxes."

They fired two warning shots before they left the compound, the report said.

Rebels widely were believed to have taken part in the operations, said Col. Jago Lee Pojas, commander of the troops that fled to Pejas (ITF), in charge of intelligence operations on Panay Island.

Pojas said they were a 15-person team to extort fee the rebels.

"They (rebels) took advantage of the focus of our troops on security during the [May 10] election," he said in a telephone interview.

The rebels were believed to be part of the 100th Squadron Terrorizing Command in the operations in Southern Iloilo and parts of Antique.

The 100th unit is said to be under the Southern Front Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines-Luzon.

Firm forbids employees from using its name

BAGUIO CITY—Some homeowners Philippines Inc., one of the country's largest semiconductors firms, has forbidden a group of former employees from using its corporate name in its "campaign for justice."

The firm's officials contacted "The Survivors of Texas Instruments and Other Firms in the Philippines," saying there is "discontinue the unauthorized use of its trade name in the group's solicitation campaign," according to a Tipinerman.

The "Survivors" are retrenched factory workers in Southern Luzon who filed the 225-year-old request firm who blame their former employer for their unemployment, including money.

Formed in 2002, the group used to call itself as "Ex-Texi" when it launched a media campaign after filing Tipi. The members are pursuing the firm to confirm that they contracted from "work-related" diseases while under its employ to get specialized benefits from the Social Security System.

But the group never anticipated that Tipi would retaliate by involving its trademark even its name, said Linda Cortes, vice-chairman of the activities' group Estan Ka.

Estan Ka, which is supporting the "Survivors," said the solicitation campaign is "garbled" because the group is "respectable."

The group said such mistake has discouraged unskilled investors to finance the lobby against Tipi. Most members are either bedridden or rely on pensions or as with and cannot to enable them to move around.

Based on a medical investigation, almost all of these former employees suffer from some rheumatism, abdominal or spinal ailments, said dubbed lung cancer, Salvator Eliel, a group member, said.

Ordovia said the solicitation drive has reached out to civic groups and local government officials, including the Baguio City council.

But Tipi has posted ads in numerous in Baguio newspapers last weekend denouncing the firm from the lobby group.

The group is bringing on the company's trick tactic will be told liable to his/her actions," the advertisement said.

Tipi officials declined to explain their position although they have issued a statement.

Vincent Cabreza, PIR Northern Luzon Bureau

New Baguio mayor to focus on casino issue

BAGUIO CITY—Businessman here said the mayor-elect must not be allowed the previous Baguio administration has, except Baguio Mayor-elect Bernardo Bautista in the last seat.

Banning a campaign on such grounds, Bautista said the right lighted a Baguio casino and a pro-parking fare, however may address the polarizing issue within the first quarter of his term, said Mario Aliwan, president of a real estate development has been.

Bautista gave himself the deadline. During a press conference on Monday, he vowed to immediately correct or revoke "bad contracts," which allowed monopolies to control the city's many traffic and economy.

Bautista said he would review a build-operate-transfer endorsed by the administration of Mayor Bernardo Vergara and Mahanlog because it did not seek Baguio's concurrence in the proposals.

He also vowed to revoke the payparking contract with Ambassador Parking System Corp., pursue the rental debts of Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevcor), and draft a settlement of the long-delayed market contract with Urdaneta Development Corp.

The 77-year-old Bautista also said casino, more living comfort to the people of Baguio City and Camp John Hay.

Vanessa said lawyers supporting Church-led efforts of the casino would not the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) and the city council for allowing a private firm to operate the casino.

He said a recent Supreme Court ruling forbade Pagcor from locating casino franchises.

Many businessmen gave guarded comments about Vanessa's victory.

"We are still waiting to see what he can do. Nineteen has a reputation for being very development," said Carlos Hortaleza Empleo, Baguio national vice president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Vincent Cabreza, PIR Northern Luzon Bureau

Southern Leyte lawmaker loses to former ally

By Joel Rivera
PIR Visayas Bureau

ISABEL CITY—Reelectionist Southern Leyte Rep. Jesusito Salcedo lost to his former ally in a hotly-contested election contested by the failure of the governor.

Salcedo, who used to lord it over the province's politics, was not the only losing candidate but his daughter as well and four of the reelected candidates supported.

Salcedo (LDP) lost with a margin of 44,706 votes to 35,171 votes against former Rep. Roger Mercado (Lakas-CMD-NPC coalition) who garnered 39,879 to 34 towns and a city in the province.

Salcedo's daughter, Mia Salcedo, was also defeated in the race for the governor and the Gov. Rosette Y. Lerma getting a fresh mandate to reach their third terms.

Lerma, who got 107,996 votes, was over 50,000 votes ahead of Mia Salcedo, who 40,614 votes. Southern Leyte has a voting population of 209,000 voters.

Rosa of Salcedo's mayoralty also lose to Lakas-CMD-NPC candidate Leo Mercado in the towns of Macrohon, Sogod, San Juan and Pintuyan.

In Maasin, where he claimed to be the "father of the city," Salcedo got beaten by at least 27,000 votes. Mercado garnered 20,299 votes while the other got only 6,202 of the 36,000 who actually voted. The 30-year-old Mercado is a lawyer.

Lerma got 31,792 votes and Mia Salcedo, 13,616 votes in the city.

Incumbent mayor Damian Mercado scored by more than 30,000 votes against incumbent provincial board member Ruben Tingcungco, who got 21,796. Mercado was proclaimed winner on Wednesday at 10:30 p.m.

Mercado, Lerma and the eight board members representing the province's two districts were proclaimed winners 10:39 p.m. on Thursday.

During the 1998 election, Salcedo campaigned for Lerma when he was in the 1995 election. He won this Mercado reportedly lined at him and the helicopter he rented for the campaign but that case election.

In 2001, Salcedo filed an affidavit of disclosure of an attempted murder case for Lerma against Mercado, but then joined forces with Mercado, who was his governor but lost to Lerma.

Military bishop is new head of Lipa archdiocese

MANILA—While the entire country was busy with the election, a different kind of election was held in the Philippines.

Military bishop Ramon Arguelles was elevated as the new archbishop of the Archdiocese of Lipa, according to an announcement on Friday of the Archdiocese of Lipa.

Fr. Jose Sarmiento, Chancellor of the Lipa Archdiocese Chancery, said the announcement was done in Rome.

"The new archbishop is still in Rome. He is not yet in Lipa, but we already got the Apostolic Nuncio saying he's the archbishop of Lipa," Sarmiento said.

But Sarmiento said Arguelles was never assigned in Lipa.

He was assigned in Camp Aguinaldo. But he is a Batangueño and was born in Batangas City, Sarmiento added.

Fr. Hernie Dolor from Lipa said Arguelles was a protege of former Lipa archbishop now Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales.

The 60-year-old bishop was born in Batangas City and was raised and educated at the St. Bridget's College up to second year high school.

He then graduated in the Our Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary in the 2nd Year to 5th Year, and in 1963, went to San Carlos Seminary until he finished Theology in 1966.

He went to the Angelicum in Rome from 1972 to 1974, and the Institute d'Etat in Paris to study the French language in 1975.

He also went to Germany, France, Rome and North Africa for further studies.

Since 1970, when he was first assigned to seminary priest to San Jose de Mayvilan, Arguelles was never detailed in Batangas.

But he was assigned to different parishes and universities in the Philippines and even undertook studies in universities abroad.

He became rector of San Carlos Seminary in 1982 up to 1986.

In 1986, he became parish priest/chaplain of the University of the Philippines until 1988.

He was the parish priest of the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Quezon City in 1989 and in 1990, became chaplain of Filipinas in Rome, Italy.

In 1994, he again became the rector at the Colegio Filipino, also in Rome, but he came back to the Philippines and was assigned to the Archdiocese Military Ordinariate.

He became the Military Ordinariate of the Military Ordinariate of the Philippines based in Camp Aguinaldo until he was called to Rome.

Sun Pablo

Before Bishop Arguelles, Bishop Leonil Dorial, a native of Pangil, Laguna, has been appointed the new bishop for the Diocese of San Pablo by Pope John Paul II.

The diocese covers the whole province of Laguna.

Dorial, who will assume office in June, is taking the place of former San Pablo Bishop Francisco C. San Diego, who has been appointed bishop of the Pasig Diocese.

Dorial, who is supporting the "Survivors," said the solicitation campaign is "garbled" because the group is "respectable."

The group said such mistake has discouraged unskilled investors to finance the lobby against Tipi. Most members are either bedridden or rely on pensions or as with and cannot to enable them to move around.

Based on a medical investigation, almost all of these former employees suffer from some rheumatism, abdominal or spinal ailments, said dubbed lung cancer, Salvator Eliel, a group member, said.

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The group is bringing on the company's trick tactic will be told liable to his/her actions," the advertisement said.

Tipi officials declined to explain their position although they have issued a statement.

Vincent Cabreza, PIR Northern Luzon Bureau

GMA lead over 1M, Namfrel count shows

From page A1

MS MACAPAGAL

The 8 p.m. tally of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) showed Central Luzon giving Ms Macapagal 664,374 votes and Poe 232,407 votes, pushing their total number of votes as the time to 3,848,575 and 2,850,126, respectively. (See related story on Page A12.)

Poe and running mate Loren Legarda earlier complained to Namfrel about the delay in the processing of votes from Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog where they were believed to be strong.

But the votes from Central Luzon, which started arriving at midnight Sunday, proved to be a big disappointment for Poe and Legarda.

Ms Macapagal's lead over Poe breached one million votes after the tally releases by Namfrel. She was leading Poe by 884,852 votes as of 1 a.m.; 994,300 as of 5 a.m.; 940,805 as of 1 p.m., 914,445 as of 5 p.m., and 1,389,249 as of 7 p.m. (See table on Page A2.)

The Namfrel count covered 58,926 precincts, or 27.23 percent of the total 216,362 precincts nationwide.

In the vice presidential race, Noli de Castro was leading Loren Legarda by 951,288 votes, and took nine of the 17 regions, including the Overseas Vote.

Helping Ms Macapagal solidify her hold on the top post as of 5 p.m., were the 514,321 votes from Western Visayas and the 394,479 votes Central Visayas. In contrast, Poe got only 133,212 votes in Western Visayas and 128,899 votes in Central Visayas.

Poe, however, took Eastern Visayas, which gave him a lead of more than 50,000 votes over Ms Macapagal, still not enough to overturn the President's overall standing.

Bicol

The President also retained the lead from Raul Roco in Bicol. She was still leading by a big margin in Caraga, Cordillera Autonomous Region and the Overseas Vote, which was classified as Region 17.

Poe, on the other hand, remained the undisputed leader in Southern Tagalog, Western Mindanao, Southern Mindanao, Central Mindanao, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Metro Manila.

The two were neck and neck in Ilocos, Cagayan, Northern Mindanao and Southern Mindanao.

The votes of topnotcher Manuel Roxas II in the senatorial race reached 5,476,206 as against 4,946,751 for second-placer Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr.

Lito Lapid standing in the 0V also improved dramatically from the 9th spot to second.

Revilla, who topped the 0V the past two days, lost his spot to Alfredo Lim while Miriam Defensor-Santiago remained third.

Richard Gordon jumped two notches higher from the fifth spot as of 4 p.m. of Saturday to the third spot, dislodging Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who dropped to fourth place.

Jamby Madrigal fell to fifth, while Miriam Defensor-Santiago dropped to seventh.

Pia Juliana Cayetano fought hard to retain the sixth spot as party-mate Lito Lapid entered the winning circle by landing in the eighth spot.

Manuel "Lito" Lapid was outside the Magic 12 from Day One of the Namfrel count. His rapid ascent was brought about by the avalanche of votes from Central Luzon, particularly from his hometown in Pampanga.

Alfredo Lim now ranked ninth, Rodolfo Biazon in 11th place, while Robert Barbers was 10th and Ilarde was in 12th place.

Kicked out of the Magic 12 was Jinggoy Estrada while John Osmeña was last standing up to the overall standing.

Party-list groups

Results of the national canvassing that the Commission on Elections released yesterday showed that Lim, Revilla, Roxas, Pimentel, Ejercito, Estrada, Ernesto Maceda, Santiago, Lapid, Gordon, Biazon and Osmeña made it to the Magic 12 in the senatorial race.

The Comelec tally was as of 8:57 p.m., representing certificates of canvass from overseas absentee voting, local absentee voting of armed personnel, Central Luzon and Ilocos provinces.

In the party-list race, the overseas Filipino voters picked groups such as Akbayan, Bayan Muna and Citizens Battle Against Corruption.

Filipinos abroad also voted for migrants' groups like Migrante and Pinoy Overseas, along with labor groups Gabay ng Manggagawang Pilipino and Organisasyon ng Manggagawang Migranteat sa Republika.

Despoing Rev. Gregorio Insunza's Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. also made it to the list with Gabriela, Alliance for Nationalists and Democracy, Freedom Party, Alliance of Volunteer Educators, Bisig and the Alyansa ng May Kapansanang Pilipino.

Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra announced the results at a press conference, but the tally sheet had not been signed by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and was, therefore, technically not official because of the absence of his signature.

The National Board of Canvassers finished another 23 COCs yesterday, but the results were neither released nor signed by the Comelec.

Update

Comelec information officer Mila Desamito said that the poll body would not update the results after the close of every canvassing. The results that would be made public would be a day late.

Abalos expressed confidence that the NBC would finish canvassing the 176 COCs within 15 days and proclaim the 12 new senators and party-list representatives by the end of the month.

The Comelec en banc signed a new resolution yesterday delegating petitions and complaints concerning the conduct of the provincial and city canvassing to the board of canvassers.

Only when the petitioners are not satisfied with the board's ruling or when the complaint pertains to the conduct of the board that an appeal or petition can be forwarded to the Comelec. Otherwise, the board of canvassers were mandated to proclaim the winners immediately after the close of canvass.

Abalos said it was easy to tally the COCs from abroad because these were not contested.

"Wait until the local COCs arrive. That is where the problem starts," Abalos said in an interview at the Philippine International Convention Center, where the NBC was convened on its second day yesterday.

Abalos said that the NBC would work until 8 p.m. starting today instead of the 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule that it had adopted.

GMA 'inauguration' could be held in the Visayas

From page A1

gal-Arroyo is apparently losing sleep over one detail—where to hold the inauguration ceremony for her next six-year term.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, a staunch presidential ally said that aside from Manila, Ms Macapagal was considering the cities of Cebu or Iloilo.

Drilon said this on Saturday, as the Commission on Elections' canvassing of votes for the Senate and party-list slots began. Official canvassing for president and vice president do not start until May 24.

The winner of the presidential race will be sworn in on June 30.

According to Drilon, Ms Macapagal "wants to show her gratitude" to the people of the two Visayan capitals where, in partial and unofficial counts, she scored a commanding lead over her closest rival, Fernando Poe Jr.

What, not Luhan or Binalonan?

Based on survey results, Ms Macapagal expected to win in the Visayas over Poe by a huge margin. The region has around 6.8 million voters—3.5 million for Western Visayas, 2.3 million for Central Visayas, and 2 million for Eastern Visayas.

In Western Visayas—comprising the provinces of Iloilo, Guimaras, Antique, Aklan, Capiz and Negros Occidental—Ms Macapagal won by nearly a million votes, said Drilon.

This, he noted, was her biggest lead so far among all the regions that have issued its certificates of canvass. He added that in its just completed provincial count, Negros Occidental gave Ms Macapagal 300,000 votes more than Poe, said to Iloilo, she led the actor by 900,000.

In Central Visayas—Cebu, Negros Oriental, Bohol and Siquijor—a quick count conducted by Comelec, the Cebu counterpart of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections, showed Ms Macapagal leading by nearly a million votes, about 900,000 of which came from Cebu alone. Cebu has 2 million registered voters, 75 percent of whom cast their votes on May 10.

In Negros Oriental, Ms Macapagal got 260,291 votes against Poe's 119,588.

Drilon took the opportunity to challenge Poe's supporters to substantiate their charge that the elections were fraught with irregularities.

"The sweeping accusations serve no purpose other than to agitate the people," Drilon told the reporters. He said it was the responsibility of political leaders to do their share in calming the people.

But he said the government was prepared for any unrest over the results of the election. "The situation is under control. I am confident that we are a rationale people," said Drilon.

Best to leave the heavy stuff to the lieutenants. Ms Macapagal has bigger things on her mind right now. Like, should she prepare an inaugural address in Tagalog, Bisaya or Cebuano? *With a report from Maricar Bautista, Pete Hiwayan Buwan*

ELECTION 2004

PNP 'count' helpful in hot spots

MANILA, the Commission on Elections and the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections were considering quick counts, the Philippine National Police was already counting votes in certain precincts nationwide.

And the PNP's efforts proved faster and more systematic, at least in Caraballo and Bicutan, which were both placed under senior Comelec control due to pre-election violence incidents, because only the Comelec results for president, vice president, governor and mayor were obtained.

Caraballo area police chief, Senior Supt. Wilberto Mandin, who had been active in leading updates in the hotspots during the elections, said this was the first time that the PNP was involved in the counting.

The figures, he said, came from police stations through their monitoring action centers.

When a town has completed the counting, the data are automatically relayed to the provincial election monitoring action centers (Pemac).

Policemen escorting the election inspectors who carried the ballot boxes were the ones responsible for getting the figures and details, such as the number of precincts covered and what time the tallies were finished, Mandin said.

Unofficial

He explained that though they were relaying updates every two to three hours, they always underscored that the figures were unofficial.

"As soon as we get the updates, we transmitted them to the regional election monitoring action centers (Remac) until they reached our national election monitoring action center (Nemac) based in our headquarters in Camp Crame," he said.

Thus, their counting for Caraballoanos was already completed on Thursday evening.

They had the following complete unofficial results: For president, Fernando for it, 41,481 votes; followed by Raul Roco, 38,616; Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, 18,158; Eddie Villanueva, 4,096; and Panfilo Lacson, 4,952.

For vice president, Loren Legarda attained Noli De Castro with an almost 56 percent margin, garnering 58,000 against her rival's 24,228 votes.

For governor, incumbent Leandro Verceles Jr.'s final vote was 63,046, while his challenger, Jun Andres cousin Mayor Joseph Cua, had 41,561 votes. The precincts covered were 841.

With its performance, Mandin said he is confident that the PNP will not be biased.

He is riding with any of the candidates.

Peaceful

He said the election in Caraballoanos was generally peaceful, except for the intermittent that Cua was planning to file a protest with the Comelec due to some technical concerns.

In Bicutan, Pemac also successfully conducted its version of quick count, surpassing Mandin's quick count, which failed due to technical reasons.

The Bicutan unit counted votes for the city level.

As of Friday afternoon, the Pemac had finished the counting just in time as the Comelec in the province also closed its canvassing.

There was no reported ballot snatching, killing of electors in the province during the elections day and after, said Sr. Supt. Julius Obilla, chief of staff of the Bicol police.

Brig. Gen. John D. Bulliayan, commanding general of the Army's 9th Infantry Division based in Camp Cristobal, Cotabato City, shared Obilla's observation.

Bulliayan said that before election day, several persons were reported killed in separate shooting incidents. No casualties were reported in two bombing incidents.

Police encounters with armed men led to the recovery of 14 high-powered firearms, death of nine rebels and guns, and the capture of six other persons.

Bulliayan also monitored the presence of several armed groups hired by politicians and "imported" from outside the province.

Task force

Bulliayan organized and deployed in Maguindanao the Task Force "Saguisag," a special operating unit composed of joint forces from the 33rd Infantry Battalion, 7th Scout Ranger Co. and Leave the 22nd IB under the 9th Infantry Brigade.

Military checkpoints were established in strategic areas, which netted three firearms, one 12-gauge shotgun, one .45-cal. pistol and one .22-cal. pistol with live bullets.

Authorities intercepted a number of illegal election paraphernalia with cash money intended for vote-buying, Bulliayan said.

The military banned over all suspected violences and accusation to the police in the charges of violation of the Omnibus Elections Code could be filed against them.

"During the entire presence of Akabayi under Comelec control was a totally drove that paved the way for the establishment of a very conducive atmosphere for the people of the province to exercise their right to suffrage last May 10," Bulliayan said. "We have ensured the lawless elements of the society this time."

Bishop elated

Bishop Joel Baldos of the Maubas parish expressed joy over the result of elections so far on peace and order in combat.

Baldos said he hoped that this would be the start of a massive political exercise in the province.

Reelected Bandsar City Mayor Socrates Tiparon also told the Inquirer that they hoped Maubas would be erased from the map of election hot spots. Ronnie Lungle and Joyce Maji/Bicol, PNA Southern Luzon Bureau; and Angelo Mella, contributor

Pampanga no longer 'opposition country'

By Tarcelo Crespo
Philippine Daily Inquirer

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga, the 10th most rich province in the country, broke the tradition of being an opposition bailiwick as 882,252 of President Macapagal-Arroyo's provincemates gave her the votes over her four rivals, according to Namfrel's count in 5,114 out of 5,446 precincts last Friday.

In the province of LAKAMPAN voters, she handed tally showed opposition presidential candidates Fernando Poe Jr. garnering 81,760 votes; followed by Villanueva, 32,748; Panfilo Lacson, 30,095; and Raul Roco, 15,168.

Ms Macapagal's leaders have could not say whether the home votes were primarily due to regionalism, her campaign or to the dominance of the Labor-Christian Muslim Democrats leaders.

It is known, however, that the local Nacionalista People's Coalition, which ruled in Pampanga since martial years the late 1960s, has coalesced with the Lakas ruling party.

All three gubernatorial candidates—Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc, Rep. Oscar Rodriguez and Board Member Mach Lapid—have supported Ms Macapagal.

According to former Pampanga Rep. Emigdio Lingad, Pampanguenos' decision of not to an opposition bailiwick began to be observed in the Nov. 14, 1992 presidential race.

His father's best friend, Liberal Party bet Eduardo Macapagal, resulted the ending Ramon Mitra's Cadre II for victis. Macapagal, the "Voice Boy from Lubao," won heavily in Pampanga.

In the Nov. 8, 1986 elections, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan received enough votes to defeat Macapagal in Pampanga.

Lingad said Pampanga was one of the only two provinces that went for opposition presidential candidate Salvador Laurel in the Jan. 17, 1949 elections. The other province was Cebu, where the Osmeña clan is influential.

Pampanga was a strong bastion of the Liberal in the two decades of the Marcos dictatorship, with former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. of nearby Tarlac leading the struggle. This happened even as Sen. Estrella Montelibano, a Marcos ally, held power.

In the 1986 snap presidential election, Aquino's widow, Corazon, won by a landslide in Pampanga.

The vote-rich province of Pampanga also observers then attributed this to the endorsement of Governor Ignacio and her local supporters.

In the 1998 elections, Rapatriate-pangasinan picked Joseph Estrada over 10 other contenders.

"Many opposition than administration presidential candidates won in Pampanga. There is a reversal of that trend this time (with the showing of Ms Macapagal)," said Lingad, who supported Estrada.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

CALOOCAN CITY

Mayor
Recto, Macario Jr. (Reelectionist) 119,641
Malapitan, Oscar S. 116,511
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Asistio, Antolin T. 120,911
Echiverri, Edgardo 112,000
Lim, Jose Antonio 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Echiverri, Edgardo 120,911
Lim, Jose Antonio 112,000
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Malapitan, Oscar S. 116,511
Asistio, Antolin T. 112,000
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

MANILA CITY

Mayor
Lim, Alfredo S. 120,911
Atienza, Jose L. Jr. 112,000
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Isko Moreno 120,911
Lacuna, Honey 112,000
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Bagatsing, Maria Theresa 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Bagatsing, Maria Theresa 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

MARIKINA CITY

Mayor
Marcos, Bongbong 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Teodoro, Jose Jr. 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Teodoro, Jose Jr. 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Marcos, Bongbong 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

MUNTINLUPA CITY

Mayor
Fresnedi, Jaime 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Biazon, Rodolfo 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Biazon, Rodolfo 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Fresnedi, Jaime 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

NAVOTAS CITY

Mayor
Tiangco, Toby 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Tiangco, Toby 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Tiangco, Toby 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

PARAÑAQUE CITY

Mayor
Olivarez, Joey 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Olivarez, Joey 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Olivarez, Joey 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Olivarez, Joey 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

PASAY CITY

Mayor
Trivino, Antonio 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Trivino, Antonio 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Trivino, Antonio 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Trivino, Antonio 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

QUEZON CITY

Mayor
Belmonte, Sonny 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Belmonte, Sonny 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Belmonte, Sonny 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Belmonte, Sonny 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

SAN JUAN

Mayor
Zamora, Joseph Victor G. 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Zamora, Joseph Victor G. 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Zamora, Joseph Victor G. 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Zamora, Joseph Victor G. 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

VALENZUELA CITY

Mayor
Gatchalian, Rex 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Vice Mayor
Gatchalian, Rex 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District I)
Gatchalian, Rex 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

Congressman (District II)
Gatchalian, Rex 120,911
Bautista, Benito C. 1,009

PROVINCIAL TABULATIONS

CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION (CAR)

ABRA

Governor
Valera, Vicente P. proclaimed

Congressman
Bernardo, Luis, Jr. P. proclaimed

REGION I

ILOCOS NORTE

Governor
Lee, Bayan S. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Rodriguez, Ajax, Jr. C. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Marcos, Ferdinand L. proclaimed

ILOCOS SUR

Governor
Ong, Chavit N. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Singson, Eric proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Co, Faustino III proclaimed

LA UNION

Governor
Ortega, Victor O. proclaimed

PANGASINAN

Governor
Espino, Amado S. III proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Celeste, Leopoldo M. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Agabas, Jesus Jose V. proclaimed

Congressman (District III)
Sison, Jesus Jose V. proclaimed

Congressman (District IV)
Rosario, Marlyn L. proclaimed

Mayor (Dagupan City)
Lim, Jeremias proclaimed

REGION II

BATANES

Governor
Tuazon, Vicente S. proclaimed

Congressman
Tuazon, Vicente S. proclaimed

CAGAYAN

Governor
Lara, Edgar V. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Antonino, Juan Ponce proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Mamba, Jaime Jose proclaimed

Congressman (District III)
Cagas, Rodolfo G. proclaimed

ISABELA

Governor
Dy, Faustino Jr. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Dy, Faustino III proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Dy, Faustino IV proclaimed

NUEVA VIZCAYA

Governor
Ganzon, Carlos L. proclaimed

Congressman
Padilla, Leonardo, Jr. D. proclaimed

QUIRINO

Governor
Tolentino, Junior proclaimed

Congressman
Tolentino, Junior proclaimed

REGION III

BATAAN

Governor
Garcia, Enrique Jr. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Roman, Antonio C. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Garcia, Tomasino C. proclaimed

BULACAN

Governor
Alvarado, Josefina M. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Pineda, Eugenio M. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Cayetano, Lorna C. proclaimed

Congressman (District III)
Sy, Teodoro proclaimed

Mayor (Malolos City)
Lee, Danilo proclaimed

NUEVA ECIJA

Governor
Joson, Jonathan B. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Joson, Jonathan B. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Pineda, Rosario M. proclaimed

PAMPANGA

Governor
Dabuco, Eduardo M. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Nepomuceno, Teresita L. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Castillo, Jesse Rey V. proclaimed

Congressman (District III)
Pineda, Oscar proclaimed

Mayor (San Fernando City)
Rodriguez, Juan S. proclaimed

REGION IV-A

CAVITE

Governor
Lara, Edgar V. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Mendoza, Ajax, Jr. C. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Ely, Cheni D. proclaimed

Congressman (District III)
Ely, Pandino III proclaimed

Congressman (District IV)
Ely, Pandino IV proclaimed

REGION V

ALBAY

Governor
Formerly as of 5/7/2004
Joey Salceda proclaimed
Bogalon, Gerardo C. 143,564

Congressman (District I)
Joey Salceda, Wilfredo M. proclaimed

REGION VI

ANTIQUE

Governor
Perez, Exequiel D. proclaimed

Congressman
Perez, Exequiel D. proclaimed

CAPIZ

Governor
Tanco, Victor V. proclaimed

Congressman
Tanco, Victor V. proclaimed

ILOILO

Governor
Garin, Niel D. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Garin, Niel D. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Garin, Niel D. proclaimed

Mayor (Iloilo City)
Garin, Niel D. proclaimed

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

Governor
Lacson, Alfredo Marañon III proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Lacson, Alfredo Marañon III proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Lacson, Alfredo Marañon III proclaimed

Mayor (Bacolod City)
Lacson, Alfredo Marañon III proclaimed

Mayor (Silay City)
Lacson, Alfredo Marañon III proclaimed

Mayor (Cadiz City)
Lacson, Alfredo Marañon III proclaimed

REGION VII

BOHOL

Governor
Aumentado, Erico B. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Chatto, Eduardo M. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Cajel, Tomasino C. proclaimed

Congressman (District III)
Jala, Rodolfo M. proclaimed

Mayor (Tagbilaran City)
Jala, Rodolfo M. proclaimed

CEBU

Governor
Garcia, Gwendolyn F. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Garcia, Pablo C. 6,752
Durano, Ramon O. 5 192,000
Martinez, Eduardo, Jr. C. 192,000
Mercado, Antonio M. 192,000
Suarez, Nathaniel S. 5,028

Congressman (District II)
Tejada, Roberto C. P. proclaimed

Congressman (District III)
Martinez, Glenn R. proclaimed

Congressman (Mandaue City)
Requinto, Arthur C. proclaimed

Mayor (Cebu City)
Osmeña, Tomas R. III proclaimed

NEGROS ORIENTAL

Governor
Romero, Pedro C. proclaimed

Congressman
Romero, Pedro C. proclaimed

REGION VIII

LEYTE

Governor
Petilla, Remedios L. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Veloso, Alfred M. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Romualdez, Martin A. proclaimed

Congressman (Tacloban City)
Formerly as of 5/13/04 pm
Romualdez, Alfred Vincent S. proclaimed

SAMAR

Governor
Tan, Milagros proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Tan, Milagros proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Uy, Reynaldo proclaimed

REGION IX

ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

Governor
Cerilles, Antonio H. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Cerilles, Aurora Z. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Cerilles, Antonio H. proclaimed

Mayor (Zamboanga City)
Formerly as of 5/13/04 pm
Lobregat, Maria C. proclaimed

ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE

Governor
Jalosjos, Romeo S. proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Jalosjos, Romeo S. proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Jalosjos, Romeo S. proclaimed

REGION X

BUKIDNON

Governor
Zubiri, Jose Ma. Alagadon proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Zubiri, Jose Ma. Alagadon proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Zubiri, Jose Ma. Alagadon proclaimed

CAMIGUIN

Governor
Romualdez, Pedro G. proclaimed

Congressman
Romualdez, Pedro G. proclaimed

LANAO DEL NORTE

Governor
Imelda Dimaporo proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Dimaporo, Abdullah proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Dimaporo, Imelda proclaimed

MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL

Governor
Ramiro, Herminia proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Ramiro, Herminia proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Ramiro, Herminia proclaimed

MISAMIS ORIENTAL

Governor
Emano, Oscar proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Emano, Oscar proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Emano, Oscar proclaimed

REGION XI

DAVAO DEL NORTE

Governor
Rodriguez, Rodolfo proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Rodriguez, Rodolfo proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Rodriguez, Rodolfo proclaimed

DAVAO DEL SUR

Governor
Bautista, Yvonne proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Bautista, Yvonne proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Bautista, Yvonne proclaimed

DAVAO ORIENTAL

Governor
Rodriguez, Rodolfo proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Rodriguez, Rodolfo proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Rodriguez, Rodolfo proclaimed

REGION XII

NORTH COTABATO

Governor
Mendoza, Emmylou proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Mendoza, Emmylou proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Mendoza, Emmylou proclaimed

SOUTH COTABATO

Governor
Pacquiao, Manny proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Pacquiao, Manny proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Pacquiao, Manny proclaimed

SULTAN KUDARAT

Governor
Suarez, Suharto proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Suarez, Suharto proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Suarez, Suharto proclaimed

REGION XIII

AGUSAN DEL NORTE

Governor
Pichay, Modesto proclaimed

Congressman
Pichay, Modesto proclaimed

AGUSAN DEL SUR

Governor
Ecleo, Robert proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Ecleo, Robert proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Ecleo, Robert proclaimed

SURIGAO DEL NORTE

Governor
Barbers, Robert proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Ortiz, Gerard proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Barbers, Robert proclaimed

SURIGAO DEL SUR

Governor
Lee, Florencio proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Lee, Florencio proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Lee, Florencio proclaimed

ARMM

BASILAN

Governor
Salliman, Jim proclaimed

Congressman
Salliman, Jim proclaimed

LANAO DEL SUR

Governor
Adiong, Mamintal proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Adiong, Mamintal proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Adiong, Mamintal proclaimed

MAGUINDANAO

Governor
Sinsuat, Datu Andal proclaimed

Congressman (District I)
Sinsuat, Datu Andal proclaimed

Congressman (District II)
Sinsuat, Datu Andal proclaimed

SULU

Governor
Tan, Abdusakur proclaimed

Congressman
Tan, Abdusakur proclaimed

TAWI-TAWI

Governor
Sahali, Mahide proclaimed

Congressman
Sahali, Mahide proclaimed

METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Manalay

Comelec trashes Defensor

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

THE COMMISSION on Elections has declared as invalid the candidacy of Mabini Defensor Jr., who is contesting backing the partial defeat made by in the race for the third congressional district of Quezon City.

Because of the Comelec resolution, the House of Mabini Pilares said the House secretary that he was just waiting to be proclaimed winner.

Pastor's calling Pilares as "outgoing congressman-elect," expressing gratitude to his voters have also been losing.

However, the Comelec in Quezon City continued count the votes of Defensor since a copy of the disqualification order had not been received by him.

In the resolution dated May 14, the Commission on Elections' certificate of candidacy for congress of Anna Liza Cabochan. Though her COC was nominal, the lawyer who nominated it had no required nomination, the Comelec said.

Defensor was a substitute candidate for Cabochan. With Cabochan's COC canceled, the Comelec also declared Defensor's candidacy as invalid.

Defensor could not be reached for comment. with Che Ishiwatari Bondoc

Stars fall blazing in Parañaque

TWO HEARTLY armed Army soldiers stand guard at the entrance of the Pasig City Hall, where canvassing of the votes cast for the local elections continues. The city was identified as an election hotspot but the conduct of the polling was described as generally peaceful. AP/ CHRIS

By Neil Llan, Abet Dagoc and Tarra Quismundo

IT WAS a disaster for actor-turned politician Joey Marquez and almost everybody related to him in the recent polls.

Marquez, actor-turned-convicted debtor in Bello Gobo in the bards for Congress, was pointed by his estranged wife, Alma, and son, Jeremy, on June's vote.

The loss for Alma came after the Commission on Elections proclaimed incumbent Parañaque vice-mayor Florencio Bernabe as the winner in the closest election by.

Bernabe, who garnered 72,847 votes, won against former mayor Eddie Oliveros and actress Alma Moreno, who got 71,976 and 28,007 votes respectively.

Marquez son

Jeremy, the son of Marquez, failed to get votes a seat in the city's council. He got 39,218 votes.

Another television and show biz personality, Jose Mathias-Nono, alone palpitably known as Chin Gutierrez, also lost his bid as second district councilor after getting only 14,016 votes.

But not all were left.

Incumbent councilor Andrea Jose "Aiza" Olaso Jr., won the third district seat, while Sipa Mayor Val Mar Intercontinental as the fifth winning councilor in the second district.

Olaso garnered 87,395 votes, defeating Florencia Amores, who got only 51,179 votes.

Also elected from Eduardo Diaz, who scored his second term to represent the city's first district in Congress after acquiring 87,809 votes. He won by a margin of 6,074 votes over closest rival Tomas Buenaga.

National Security Adviser Ilio Gobo, who got 45,403 votes, landed in the congressional seat for the city's second district. He left Marques behind with only 16,206 votes.

Proclamation

Gobo's son, Jose Enrico Gobo, won the second seat of the district of councilors in the city's first district after garnering 44,805 votes.

Winners were proclaimed yesterday morning, after the Comelec finished the tabulation for local positions around 4:30 a.m.

Meanwhile, the Comelec's official count in Pasay City is expected to be wrapped up by tomorrow, said Atty. Armando Mallorca, Election officer.

Pasay City has 1,372 precincts and as of 5 a.m. yesterday about 90 percent of election returns had been canvassed.

Incumbent Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad was ahead of the other mayoral candidates, with 58,605 votes. Closest to him is the two was Ricardo Cuenca, who had 46,152 votes.

In Manila, the giant rally board at the Plaza Agustin Bonifacio remained empty as employees rushed to put up the figures results did not come to work.

This even as board of Canvassers chair Ramon Bautista said that canvassing for local positions could be finished by Sunday.

Partial results announcing between than 64 percent of the city's votes showed that the city would see the same men as the top posts, based on partial results of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Incumbent Manila Mayor Jose L. Atienza Jr. of the Liberal Party continued to lead the mayoral race with 288,352 votes. He had by 153,105 over Endorsed by Nagkakaisang Pilipino's Abel Lopez as of 6 a.m. yesterday.

Lacuna lead

Manila's running mate, Jose Bobbed Bagatsing, however, lagged behind incumbent Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna.

Lacuna has received 226,174 votes as of yesterday morning, leading over Bagatsing, who garnered 175,124 votes.

However, Atienza's son, Ritz, appeared to be lagging behind incumbent 10th District Rep. Joey Hilario.

The latter results from Number of Second Atienza trailing by 7,000 votes behind Hilario.

Ritz was ready to accept defeat. "If I lost, I shall live to fight again another day," said Atienza as an interview yesterday.

Fresnedi remains Muntinlupa City mayor

INCUMBENT Mayor Aimee Fresnedi has retained the mayoral seat in Muntinlupa City after defeating his closest opponent, Elizabeth Mamaplop in the local elections.

The Commission on Elections yesterday proclaimed Fresnedi, who garnered 61,104 votes, as winner. Mamaplop only got 61,280 votes.

The Comelec also proclaimed Abdrin Bati Nolte as the city's new vice mayor.

Bati Nolte acquired 53,201 votes, leaving incumbent Jo Jason Alcaraz behind with 46,708 votes.

Rep. Rozanna Rufino Biazon, son of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, won another term by garnering 98,738 votes.

Muntinlupa public information officer Ivan Mercela said Fresnedi was thankful that the city's residents still trusted and believed in the leadership.

Margaux Orbe, Jayson Perez

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Manila holds breath for polls, canvassing

By D.J. Yap, Jemima Amarao and Sofia Jacinto

MOVE over telenovelas, the elections and the subsequent tabulation of votes have emerged as the latest craze for Manilenos.

Since Monday last week, the two main sites of Manila residents were glued to radio and television sets with watching with bated breathe on who was winning and losing in the polls.

Rosario Francisco, 46, a school official, said that it was her duty to keep track of election results and of "disaster shooting and vote-buying."

Dwelling she watched the ABS-CBN News Channel and the morning newspapers for election news and read the business for tally updates.

"The Comelec did a poor job because many people were disenfranchised," said Francisco.

Bruce Barrios, 28, believes that the elections were not successful because of problems in the counting.

He keeps abreast of the latest tallies by going to to Bombo Radio from morning until noon, when he leaves for work selling flowers on Vito Cruz Street.

But for PGO Armando Lavapere, 28, a policeman stationed on Dagupin Street, problems had already been part of elections.

"Cheating can't be avoided, but I think it's not enough to influence the results," he said.

However, for Ismael Cruz, what was more irritating was the confusion brought about by varying tabulation accounts.

"On cable, PIO Hernando Perez 2U is leading. Di nandiyan siyalin ang boto, but I think people are getting confused," said the public driver.

Fifty-one-old Evangeline Bautista, a newspaper and candy retailer on Dagupin Street, has learned to become skeptic.

According to her, newspaper and online media reports would not always be trusted to give an accurate picture of the elections.

"I think we just have to wait for a few more weeks before we know the real results of the elections," she said.

Nonetheless, everybody seemed to agree that the elections were the month's great past time.

MWSS wants DENR to oust Ipo planters

By Tina Santos

THE METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) is urging the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to immediately terminate the contracts it reportedly awarded to informal families who have been allowed to live in and to harvest portions of the Ipo watershed.

In a letter to DENR Secretary Elisea Gozun, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer, MWSS administrator Orlando Hondrade stated, among others, the risk of water contamination as the current rely at least 47 shantytown should not be permitted to stay and plant fruit trees in the denuded areas of the watershed.

Contamination could result, Hondrade said, from the dwellers' sanitation practices.

"Ipo watershed is a protected area," the MWSS administrator stressed.

The MWSS official further explained that they would not advise the planting of fruit trees in the watershed since these appealed to scavengers, who might frequent the area to gather something to eat.

He added that the degradation of forest cover would be high due to agricultural tilling and eventually lead to soil erosion and siltation of the river bed and the reservoir.

Makati grand parade closes Ayala

AYALA Avenue will be closed to vehicular traffic starting noon today to give way to the Makati Grand Parade, which is one in a line of activities in preparation for the commemoration of the city's 32nd founding anniversary on June 1.

Ayala Avenue Extension, Malugay, Valad and Kamagong Streets will also be closed simultaneously.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay will lead the parade to be attended by some 5,000 city officials and employees, leaders of the Makati business community and the diplomatic corps, representatives of civic and professional groups, and residents of the city's 10 barangays.

Land, Makati Commercial Estates Association, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, Rockwell Center, San Miguel Corporation, Smart Communications, Inc., Manila Contact, Globe Telecom, Power Plant Mall, Technopro Group of Companies, Equitable-PCI Bank, Manila Bulletin, Today, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Philippine Normal University.

Organizers are advising motorists to take the following alternate routes:

For public utility buses in and from Edsa: Take Gil Puyat Avenue. If coming from Manila or Pasay: Take Del Pilar Avenue, left on Tordesillas then take Jupiter Loop.

For light vehicles to and from Edsa: Take Gil Puyat Avenue.

To and from Manila or Pasay: Take Gil Puyat Avenue, go left on Tordesillas then take the Jupiter Loop.

If driving from Ayala Avenue or Gil Puyat Avenue to Legaspi Village: Take a right on Ayala Avenue, then right on Amorsolo Street, and right on the crossroad named to Arnaiz Avenue.

From Ayala Ave or Gil Puyat to Salcedo Village: Take Gil Puyat Avenue then right on Tordesillas Street.

From Edsa or Ayala Avenue to Legaspi Village: Take Edsa, then right on Ayala Avenue then right on Paseo de Roxas.

From Edsa or Ayala Ave. to Salcedo Village: Take Ayala Avenue, right on Apartment Alley, left on Paseo de Roxas then right on Villar Street.

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SPORTS

MEGATRADE HALL

Badminton fair set June 5-6

BARELY four months after its smashing launch, the Inquirer Badminton Monthly delivers another boost to the growing sport when it stages the first Inquirer Badminton Expo on June 5-6 at the SM Megatrade Hall 3.

The expo will be a trade fair and exhibit involving the country's biggest distributors of badminton equipment, apparel and accessories as well as retailer businesses such as those supplying mats, court equipment, trophies, giveaways and electronic booking systems and event coordinators.

Giant brands and companies like Yonex, Victor and Adidas have already pledged their support for the event.

Only a third of the 10-booth hosts slots remain to be filled up, attesting to the tremendous growth of badminton in the country.

Already in the roster of exhibitors are Yonex, Mizuno, Wilson, Sportsfactory, Cliff Sports, Excalibur, Virtue, Prince and RSI, which will all showcase the latest models of equipment they are allowed to distribute in the local market.

A unique feature of the expo is the Rabbit restaurant in the exhibit area to be participated in by the best pastry players in the country aged 15 years and below. They will be representing all the companies participating in the expo.

Part of the big weekend schedule are a badminton party for celebrities and people in the industry, daily raffles, clinics and seminars on fitness.

For inquiries on the expo, interested parties may call the Inquirer Badminton office at 9170000 locals 237-239 or 241 look for Joey Arcasas, Hazel Soriano or Cheng Jerbi Cua.

Asian ladies golfest slated at John Hay

CAMP John Hay Golf Club is all set to host the 2nd Asian Ladies Golf Championship on May 24 to 26.

Sixteen teams from all over the Philippines will vie action on the 2nd golf course and rolling fairways of the par-69 course redesigned by the legendary Jack Nicklaus.

Leading the pack is defending champion Southwoods and challenges are Rivers, Mimi Wark, Cebu Country Club and Boys Town.

Le Chefs Bill King will host the welcome cocktails at the badminton Camp Adas Pito Manor on May 23, followed by Another Bonanza Night hosted by C&E Services on the 24. Ladies Dinner party at the Clubhouse on May 25 and awards luncheon May 26. These events are designed to ensure participants will have unforgettable time in the City of Pines.

Fabulous giveaways and handicap prizes are all prepared for the participants. A special discount of 5% percent is offered by the Manor Hotel on rooms for this event as declared by tournament chair Freddie Herrera and event coordinator Sherri Bell.

For inquiries, call Herrera at 442-1134 or 442-6028.

SHELL'S Eddy Mamaril (right) battles Gas Miguel's Danny Isidoro for the rebound in their PBA game last night. (Story on A23)

RYAN MANUEL

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Ildefonso keys SMB win

By Jaen Navarro

DANNY Ildefonso scored 10 of San Miguel's final 16 points last night to lead the Beermen to a pulsating 97-95 win over Shell in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

The two-time MVP finished with 23 points and seven rebounds, the last an offensive board off an Ogie Rocels miss that aided the Beermen's 14th win in 16 games.

The Turbo Chargers came very close to drawing out an upset, but for import Jerrod Wilkins in the end it is eventually drop to 6-10.

Told of his sudden change in form following a mediocre performance against idealco week ago, Ildefonso jokingly said that the turnover on first pieces over the weekend was his biggest motivation for beating the Turbo Chargers.

"But seriously speaking, I just had a good preparation for this game and it paid off during those crucial moments," Ildefonso said.

His inspired performance couldn't have come at a better time. Import Art Long suited up despite being under the weather and Ildefonso failed to contribute offensively.

Four Beermen finished in double figure with Long still scattering 20 points and Jimmy Alapag (lead scorer and floater) Sergio contributing for 12.

Ildefonso first linked Wilkins into connecting his last foul then snapped the game's last tie at 95

SAN MIGUEL (Ildefonso)

The Scores:

Shell Turbo Chargers

SAN MIGUEL 97— Ildefonso 23, Long 20, Asaytono 11, Sergio 10, Pennis, Dreyfuss 8, Rocels 4, Martin 2, Bolasco 0.

SHELL 95— Wilkins 23, Wallace 19, Calaguio 13, Tabal 12, Arnaiz 11, Baja 10, Manuel 3, Imbach 0, Jumamoy 0.

Quarters: 20-20, 49-50, 68-73, 97-95

Neat Laurel rules PSA Cup

By Edwin Villanueva

MAY Laurel zoomed to the lead from the start and remained there the way otherwise to score an impressive win under jockey Lesar Kelleta in the Philippine Sportswriters Association Cup presented at the Santa Ana Park.

The only impost in the classy seven-horse field, Mint Laurel finished the one-mile contest in 1:36.6 to edge in close of Prize Wind and made it a back-to-back coup in the event for owner Rolando Reynoso Enguerra.

"That was a great ride by Lesar. Having been on so many graduates (the rode like a veteran). He followed all the instructions to the letter," said Enguerra, who scored through Royal Catch in the 2003 running of the race.

It was the first major victory for the promising Bulloca, the 23-year-old apprentice rider from San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan who owns Enguerra for giving him the chance to ride in the latter's powerhouse stable.

"Ang sarap ng pakiramdam. Napagpasalamatan ako kay Sir (Rommel) kasi siya na. Siya yung nagbigay ng break at ako ay nagpursige sa break," said Bulloca, who rode the third-placed Neat Laurel for only the first time.

The Boyle Pomeroden-trained Mint Laurel, a five-year-old Mr. Prize mare sired for Rose out of Salmon Laurel and ridden in her last seven outings by John Cordero, collected P240,000 after outfinishing her fourth victory in 19 starts this year.

"I told Lesar to give Mint Laurel a clean breeze and he did. If He just clicked with the horse," said Fernandez, who shares the training chores for Enguerra's gallopers with Dexter Manalang.

Prize Wind, the 2003 Presidential Gold Cup champion, settled for P90,000, while Jazz Drop Rose landed third for P50,000. Coming in fourth was top choice Success Story followed by second favorite Mitchell Mitos, Speed Machine and Mister's Magic.

Mint Laurel clocked 1:49 flat (23.5-26-24-26.3) to the sure hold in honor of the late PSA director Camilo "Boy" Morales Jr.

Enguerra received the winner's trophy from Philstocks chief Antoni Diling who was joined in the unveiling rites by PSA president Nonoy Colayco, Philippine Racing Commission Eddie Ilas and Virgel Cruz. PSCI head Ramon Esteban and PSA officers Joe Antonio, Alden Cambosa and Edwin Ethalino.

Inspired by Mint Laurel's romantic ballad dedicated more for the Enguerra bettor, by request that is, the owner Rendezvous Cool Times two victory in the succeeding two.

In the day's other featured races, Angelitos reigned as Royal Lasonia topped the Williams Jaglin & Son Cup, while Baggio I ruled the classic Cup Premium Race.

MINT Enguerra (at left), owner of Mint Laurel, receives the PSA Cup trophy from Philstocks chair Jaime Diling (right) as Jimmy Lorenzo, president of the Philippine Sportswriters Association, looks on.

Smarty Jones tops Preakness, targets Triple Crown next

SMARTY Jones, with Stewart Elliott up, storms away from the field to win the Preakness stretch run by 6 lengths on Saturday.

BALTIMORE—Smarty Jones blazed into the wind running for home and won the Preakness Stakes by a record 11 1/2 lengths on Saturday, setting the stage for a dramatic Triple Crown attempt in Belmont in three weeks.

The undefeated colt has a chance to become just the 12th Triple Crown champion and the first in twenty-five Belmont Stakes by Secretariat since Affirmed in 1978.

He would also claim another $5 million bonus and become $5 young's oldest horse.

The crowd at Pimlico roared as jockey Stewart Elliott raised Smarty Jones' left hand around the finish line, Smarty Jones turned on the afterburners and clobbered nine rivals in running his record to a perfect eight wins from eight starts. In doing all that, he added another amazing chapter to an already feel-good story of the year.

The couple of rickety legged like owned a 10 to one shot by Scrappy Jones in 1871 in the first Preakness.

"He's just unbelievable. He just keeps getting better, this one of topics," Elliott said. "I mean, he just did it so easy."

While Lion Heart faded in the stretch and finished fourth, Rock Hard Ten was second, with Eddington third. Impressive was Master Smith's fifth, Song of the Sword and Water Cooler.

Running time for the 1 3/16 mile (1,900-meter) race was 1:54.59, well off the record of 1:53.40 held by Louis Quatorze (1996) and Tank's Prospect (1985).

The accompanying was put to plate years to end dogging questions for the chestnut colt who has captured America's fancy... as Pimlico City did last year by, first his Triple Crown bid fell short of victory in the Belmont.

Smarty Jones will be the start home to the last eight years with a Triple chance, but there's a big difference this time around. Finally is the only one who hasn't lost.

A record-by 11-mile (2.4-kilometer) Belmont and Smarty Jones would join Seattle Slew as the only horses to win the Triple Crown with an undefeated record. Smarty like Slew in 1977, would be 9-for-9.

AP

Patakbong Pinoy set in Pagsanjan

PAGSANJAN, Laguna, members are encouraged to join the Brave Eird © Patakbong Pinoy on Sunday 23 at the Pagsanjan town plaza.

The top 20 players in the men's and women's division will receive medals and cash prizes.

Pagsanjan Mayor Emelita Ramon Ejercito announced the 9 kilometers running event.

"The good mayor has shown his love for sports by undertaking the Brave Eird © Patakbong Pinoy. I hope that all local executives will follow his example for the benefit of grassroots sports development," said Helen Macasaet, head of small businesses.

Brave Eird © Patakbong Pinoy will be held in Biñan, the PESDP has already endorsed legs in Batangas, Valenzuela, Olongapo, Pasig, Lagunas Biñan and Batangas.

Interested Pagsanjan residents may contact Sanggunniang Kabataan Federation head Jaime B. Blanco.

Open to all ages, the event is sponsored by Philippine Sportswear and Sports Promotions, and conducted by the Biñan Runners and Sports Promotions.

Poor sportsmanship

CLEAN LIVING

Manuelo B. Mejo

THE SWEETEST thrill by the camp of Manny Pacquiao regarding the Filipino boxer's recent controversial 12-round draw against world featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico is down that reaction from sports critic and former Philippine Olympic Committee president Julio Maloles.

If every time we lose we make alibis or blame scoreboards, this is poor sportsmanship," said Maloles, a retired Spanish professor of Letran College. "Through sports we can educate our people."

Pilion Anthony Villanueva lost to the 1964 Tokyo Olympics exclusive no-win-decision, he said, adding that when Muhammad "Stevie" Ali received in Atlanta in 1996, the same thing happened.

The habit of complaining was expressed in the case of Pacquiao. "Let us abide with the decision of the referee, relentless hand, "Malones reminded. "And I hope this will not happen again."

Maloles agrees with Diliman's protest for going to the country after a verdict has been rendered by the judges. In Tito Talao of Tanauan said added father Team Pacquiao filed the formal protest. What for? You think these boxing bodies (Nevada State Athletic Commission, World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation) would risk a blemish on it by reversing the outcome just because your judge failed to score it 10-8 in one round? Expect only what the magnificent seven unanimously Marquez in the two-remaining 11 rounds."

So, who further?

He should learn to accept defeat gracefully. He should accept the reason that "the judges' decision is final," a motion that even the Supreme Court once said "simplifies sports adjudication to a degree which the largest series of life does not ordinarily notice. It is simplicity in procedure which is of the courts ought to jeopardize studies or controversies can be."

Once we sign up for a particular tournament, we have submitted ourselves to boxing and obey the rules of that tournament. If protests are allowed by rules, it must be left to the enforcement of rules of every tournament, there will be anarchy and chaos in virtually every division it could be subject to question.

In the case of Pacquiao, the Filipino fighter did not deserve the referee for counting him off his Philippine's David Kondradsen in the 3rd round or for holding him back, but he himself his failure to stop for good the only Marquez in the fifth round or a swollen left hand he suffered at the end of the opening round and by his courage and blocks on his best counter by this favored rookie he brought his 99 years as a score in Hollywood before going to Las Vegas.

"I have only myself to blame for using that cheap socks," Pacquiao said.

The Bay contacted total 116 score of judges Jesse Cleveland, I am inclined to agree—as a longtime sports fan and some-time amateur-level boxing judge—with Nevada State Athletic Commission Attorney General Brian Sandoval who said that "there is no action that the Commission can or will take." emphasizing that "a review of Nevada law will inform you (Lamont Ames, lawyer for the Pacquiao camp) that there is no protest procedure to challenge or overturn a decision rendered in a boxing match based on the allegations made in your letter."

The WBC also explained that a judge's subjective feeling about the appropriateness of 10-8 rounds is part of his/her judgment. "The Commission will not question the decision of 10 judges in scoring matters as a basis for changing a decision."

DANCE ATHLETES GEBU WIN HEAL The Dance Sports Council of Philippines, headed by Sandy Garcia, has started its year-round preparations for the Gran Intern Asian Games which the country is hosting in 2005. During the recent DSCP Pearl Queen Ranking and Competition held at the Philsports Arena, several dance couples emerged victorious. Jeremy Dalcanton, bounding out full of winning the most coveted of gold medals in the coming SEA Games. Here are the winners:

Tour Dance: Jeremy and Anne Delvaquez; amateur Latin—Michael Mendoza and Francesca Manuel; amateur Standard, Arvin and Anna Belvaquez; youth Standard and youth Latin—Reynaldo Bone Mercado and Judith Anne Mendoza; junior Standard—William Enos Bartolome and Cynthia Tuazon; junior Latin—Jonnel Paul Tabuena and Gerica Mae Bautista; juvenile Standard—Jan Kristoffer Rodis and Emily Rodriguez; and juvenile Latin—Jefferson Pimentel and Monica Cabanlong.

Entanglement, which is making its debut in the MMC calendar, continues to take wings as it enjoys the support of the public and private sector. Among its well-meaning sponsors are Bayou Grey, Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, BPO-G, Rotary Zone, Abanta FM, Joey 92.3 Playfm, SBC and barangay Poblacion.

"With these all-star support, our dance athletes are performing extraordinary well," said Ms. Garcia of these sponsors. "We hope to live up to their expectations in future encounters of competitions, including next year's SEA Games."

Golden Tour up next year

LINA

TOUR Filipinas will mark 50 years of underage cycling next year with a grand and known as the Golden Tour.

Bert Lina, Tour Filipinas chairman the 2005 Islandwise will revive the Golden Tour, are which gave birth to the Tour in 1955, for its kick-off leg and next touch base with Visayas and Mindanao.

Due to the highly positive response from the Asian Cycling Confederation regarding the conduct of the recent 2004 Tour Filipinas, Southeast Asian nations will be considered for next year's tour, Lina added.

The Tour Filipinas 2004 San Miguel-Tiger Beer was held for three days—from Manila (Mendiola) to Tuguegarao to Baguio and finally Sagada to Vigan.

In the 2005 Golden Tour, a similar route will be tested and former Tour champions, including the Manila Wheelmen titlist Antonio Aredo, will be on hand to open up the event.

And just like in 1998, as lore about the President would be invited to flag off the historic tournament at the Malacañang gate.

"It was that last hosted the Tour Filipinas six months and we would like to revive the 2005 as the Golden Tour," said Lina, chairman of the 50, which principally has handcrafted the Tour's revival.

Ildefonso keys . . .

From page A12

with two new dancers Jordani tapping at Rosario's side with the left footprint (with Dad's) back.

The Turbo Chargers' dancehall son-parents owned by poet playmaking drummer on the part of their young has the same.

Bert, Ronald Tabel gave up in Ildefonso and Chris Calagnes walked a draw with Tay Miguel elected by last three, 9-6-0.

In the second game, Talk 'N Text swamped Purefoods, 118-108, for its ninth victory in 16 games. The 7-7 Phone Pals powered past import Jay Edwards dropped to 4-12.

LA Lakers exact revenge

Oust reigning titlist Spurs in six games

KOBE BRYANT reacts after a Lakers basket during their series-clinching victory over the Spurs.

LOS ANGELES—Exactly one year after being dethroned as National Basketball Association champions, the Los Angeles Lakers got their revenge with a convincing 88-76 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Saturday.

After losing the four-out-games-of-the-West Conference semifinals, the Lakers stormed back to win four in a row, becoming just the eighth team to climb out of a 0-3 hole and win a best-of-seven series.

The perennial powerhouses were meeting in the postseason for the fifth time in six years.

Knockout blow

Last year, the Spurs barely held on to win Game Five, then delivered a 114-82 knockout blow on May 15 at the Staples Center, a loss that ended Dlo this-or-your reign and reduced several Lakers to tears.

This year, the Lakers turned the tears to cheers. Derek Fisher's miraculous shot won Game Five on Thursday, then Los Angeles put the clinches in the hands of Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant, its superstars.

O'Neal had 17 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks. He dominated on the defensive end, helped slow down Tim Duncan and even tolled some late "knock-a-thug" tactics by the Spurs.

Bryant was quiet early but scored 16 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter, when the Lakers turned back a late round by the Spurs.

Exclamation point

He added seven rebounds and seven assists and provided the exclamation point with a scoring dunk over Duncan with 1:02 to play.

Jeff Foster had playoff career highs of 20 points and 16 rebounds to power Indiana to a 94-80 victory over Miami on Saturday and a 3-2 lead in their Eastern Conference semifinal series.

That tug a Centenari with 48 for forwards Jermaine O'Neal and Ron Artest, Pacers also scored double.

He assisted the starting center spot from Steve Talbert early in the season and averaged a workmanlike 8.1 points and 7.4 rebounds, playing all 82 games.

4-year reverse

The four-year reverse had been very quiet in this series, scoring just 11 points on 5-of-9 shooting.

He was left alone on the offensive end and made the most pay, making his first nine shots.

O'Neal had 20 points and eight rebounds and Artest scored 16 points for Indiana, which continued its dominance at Conseco Fieldhouse after losing twice in Miami.

The Pacers have not lost at home since March 19. In the postseason, they have been even more dominant, winning all five games by double digits.

AFP

A FORLORN Duncan after being called for a foul

Foster hot as Pacers cool Heat

NEW YORK—Jeff Foster had 20 points and 16 rebounds, both career highs, as the Indiana Pacers evened up a 94-80 home win over the Miami Heat in Game Five of the Eastern Conference semifinals on Saturday.

The Pacers lead the best-of-seven series 3-2 and can wrap up the series when it resumes with Game Six in Miami on Monday.

Foster needed it the hard, Indiana survived a poor first quarter before rolling in the second the 19th straight for the home team in this series.

"I thought we played a good game," Indiana coach Rick Carlisle said.

"We had some struggles early on, but we had a lot of guys step up. Jeff Foster played a critical role." Miami led 21-19 after one quarter but the Pacers grabbed a five-point lead by the half before pulling away in the third quarter, outscoring the Heat, 29-16.

Jermaine O'Neal led all scorers with 22 points, while Ron Artest added 14 points and veteran leader Reggie Miller chipped in with 13.

"This Miami Heat team is really putting us," Miller said.

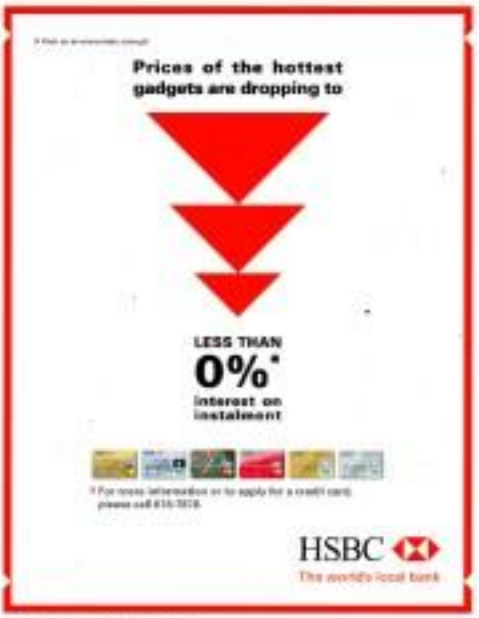
"We're going to have to bring our 'A' game to win down there." Dwayne Wade had 16 points and 10 assists to lead the Heat, which had six players in double figures in scoring.

Eddie Jones scored 15 points for Miami, while Lamar Odom had 14 points and 10 rebounds.

"I obviously did not have our team prepared to play a big Game Five today," Miami coach Stan Van Gundy said.

The Heat's one rebound in the first 47:00.

Reuters



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

Libre Raul C. Pilorello
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EIKI
BRAIN

UCPB plans sale of 4 oil mills to CIIF

January BP market to play it safe

(See stock market report on Page B3)

ITS BCII over until the list is ready, in bid filing to thicke analysts commending shorter-lived offers.

Equities players might again adopt a cautious stance tomorrow, given if today's mixed-bag performance, said Grace Cardenio, chief operating officer of FirstMetro.com.

"Some major factors are likely to affect market sentiment this week," Cardenio cited the movement of US interest rates, the volatile movement in crude prices and its effect on consumer goods, and the tally of votes in the Presidential elections.

Cardenio added that investors may hold off buying from the market until the uncertainties are resolved.

Incumbent President Macapagal-Arroyo is enjoying a narrow lead over rival Fernando Poe Jr. in the latest elections tally. Supporters of former President Joseph Estrada are now protesting the poll count.

This week, the Philippine composite index slipped 23 points or 2.1 percent to 1,071.61.

"The Philippine benchmark indices among Asia's worst gainers and losers this week as some investors lingered to worry about whimsical factors and the outcome of the elections," said Jesus Vallejo of ABACUS Capital Securities. "The local market started and ended on a down note as investors cashed out. A strong rally last Wednesday showed signs of the far clients, but overzealous investors quo the local advantage of the rebound time to look to what game they could."

Vallejo added that investors have been getting nervous about anything that could potentially threaten their investments.

"Preliminary election results and the votes to be made clear trends in the electoral outcome," Vallejo said. "The small margin between Macapagal and FPJ is a troubling scenario of another people power uprising, preventing stocks from rebounding as early ... The markets are looking for another run in the President Macapagal- who has promised to cut more the government's budget by 2010."

Meanwhile, many world oil prices are trending at possibly higher levels.

"Market players continued monitoring economic data in recent days to see how far stocks go to indicate just how much the US Federal Reserve will start raising interest rates from 40-year lows to curb building inflation," Abalos said. "The US government's report of a higher than expected increase in wholesale prices raised concerns that the Federal Reserve might raise interest rates by more than the quarter percentage point most have expected."

Elizabeth L. Rambo

By Doris C. Bumbac

THE UNITED Coconut Planters Bank plans to sell four oil mills, which own shares in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp., to the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF).

UCPB chief finance officer Gomer Robles said in an interview that the bank could not open the mills to bidding due to legal disputes over the CIIF in some law courts.

"The proceeds will not go out of the CIIF funds," Robles said.

UCPB expects to raise between P3.95 billion from the sale of Legaspi Oil Company, San Pablo Manufacturing Corp., Southern Luzon Oil Mills, and Davaoport Manufacturing Corp.

Robles said that based on UCPB's books, the bank invested P111 million in these oil mills, which own holding companies that in turn own 26 percent of SMC.

"Our share of the book value as per month of this is P3.4 billion, with a market value of up to P6 billion," Robles explained.

As of last Friday, SMC shares closed at P71 per share on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

UCPB plans to apply the proceeds from the sale to boost its capital as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas disallowed a time the including the value of these as part capital of its equity.

Robles said a third party financial adviser would be tapped to conduct an independent valuation of the shares since UCPB is the trustee of the CIIF.

Once the sale is consummated, Robles said the financial aids since previously obtained from the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. would form part of its tier 1 capital.

Last year, the government infused at least P80 billion to three

UCPB expects to earn P3 billion to P4 billion from the sale.

rial assistance to UCPB through the PDIC.

The bank suffered from heavy deposit withdrawals in Dec. 2003 after the Supreme Court ruled that the coconut levy funds were public money.

"At least as we are able to sell the oil mills, we'll comply and even exceed the minimum capital requirements of the BSP," Robles said.

UCPB is currently capitalized at about P6 billion. The fund used in capitalizing UCPB was placed

(PTO, B2)

BIR, COA to go after delinquent GOCCs

By Michelle V. Rama

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has tied up with the Commission on Audit to crack down on tax delinquent government corporations and local government units.

According to BIR Deputy Commissioner Jose Antonio, the COA has agreed to share the results of its audit investigations that could help in more stringent compliance monitoring system.

COA is responsible for auditing local government units, government owned and controlled corporations and government agencies.

Under the Electronic National Government Accounting System (ENGAS), which the COA has recently rolled out, government entities will be required to electronically submit their financial statements to the auditing agency.

"The data that COA may eventually gather through its computerized auditing system will be used by the BIR as third party information to detect government entities that fail to comply with their tax obligations," Antonio said in separate.

The BIR's move to partner with the COA will complement the revenue agency's efforts to investigate the tax delinquency of several GOCCs.

The BIR has begun sending letters of notice to GOCCs, which the BIR found to have been remiss in paying proper taxes to the national government.

Another high-ranking BIR official earlier identified the local governments of Makati City and Pasay City as the two biggest tax delinquents in Metro Manila.

The BIR has intensified its collection efforts to meet this year's target.

The BIR, which contributes over 80 percent of government's revenues, is tasked to collect P429 billion this year to help reduce the government's budget deficit to P175.4 billion.

For the first four months of the year, the BIR failed to achieve its revenue target of P137.234 billion, collecting only P134.39 billion.

Gov't eyes balanced budget before 2009

By Michelle V. Rama

THE GOVERNMENT is overhauling not the country's gaping budget deficit earlier than 2009 if the next Congress will pass key revenue measures.

The lead agency Development Budget Coordination Committee said it would struggle hard for the passage of the revenue measures, which are expected to generate for the government more P60 billion more in annual revenues.

The DBCC refused to specify the revenue measures that it will lobby in Congress, but a highly placed source said these may include the delayed reenactment of excise tax on cigarettes and alcohol, increasing tax on the transport sector, imposing value-added tax on text messages, and the lifting of the value-added tax exemption enjoyed by petroleum products.

The DBCC—composed of the Department of Finance, the National Economic and Development Authority and the Department of Budget and Management—earlier approved the revenue measures as its legislative agenda for the next Congress, which will open in June.

Should the DBCC's revenue measures be enacted into law, the government's budget deficit for 2005 is expected to stand at only P134 billion, against the target of P184 billion.

The implementation of the revenue measures may also help the government fast-track its 2004 the realization of its goal of having a balanced budget.

"Our targets may be realized earlier than scheduled if Congress will accept our proposals. We hope this new duty implement as swiftly as our agenda," said the government source.

PAL seen posting ₱500-M loss as of March '04

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Globalization's pearl and swine

EXPECT the globalization and governance debate to ratchet up in the next three years.

The United States Agency for International Development is making available $5 million (nearly P280 million) to an individual, who will be called Pearl (Philippine Economic Assistance for Reform and Liberation) contractor, and a non-government organization to administer a three-year campaign called "Targeted Intervention in Economic Reform and Governance."

USAID's latest program aims to assist the Philippine government in formulating measures that will strengthen fiscal management and reduce fiscal deficit as well as advance "rule of law strengthening."

"The policy development project is designed to assist the GRP (government of the Republic of the Philippines) strengthen its legal and regulatory regimes in the various trade and investment sectors," said a USAID briefing paper.

The Pearl contractor, who will be supervised by a US-based contractor, and the NGO, acting as think-tank, will provide assistance in conducting policy analysis and dialogues and offer training to key Philippine bureaucrats.

These USAID contractors will also sit in the "Policy Advisory Committee" whose members include senior representatives from the National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Finance, and the Congressional Office for Budget and Development.

As well, the USAID contractors will also handle a yet to be determined "special activities fund" and launch a communications and public relations program, similar to the successful, sometimes muckraking, open skies, tax evasion, and lifestyle-check campaigns also funded by USAID.

Another possible area that the US contractors would work on is the telecommunications industry to make sure that the Philippine telecom firms would increase competition, "possibly in the areas of interconnection (and) cost-based pricing."

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Zooming up

MAZDA has appointed CATS owner Felix Ang and former Bennigan's operator Dexter Co to help zoom-zoom sales of the comebacking Japanese car manufacturer.

Co has been named Manda Alabang dealer. Ang, who just opened a gleaming Mercedes Benz showroom at The Fort, will open the Mazda showroom in his pioneering CATS site on Epifanio de los Santos Ave.

According to the grapevine, it takes about P70 million to build a showroom from the ground up and stock it. Co may no longer have the Bennigan's (restaurant) franchise, but his family, a major partner in the money-making Landmark department store, is backing him up in this new venture.

Both dealerships should be open by the third quarter, in time for the local launching of the hot Mazda 3 hatchback and sedan.

The Searchers are back

THE Searchers, the other rock and roll group from Liverpool who also performed at the Araneta Coliseum in 1966, is returning to Manila to perform at the Hard Rock Café and Big Dome on May 28 and 29, respectively.

Two of the four original band members, rhythm guitarist/founder John McNally and bass guitarist Frank Allen, are still with the group, best remembered locally for such hits as "Sweet for My Sweet," "Love Potion No. 9," and "Da Doo Ron Ron."

Tickets for both the Hard Rock and Araneta Coliseum performances range from P200 to P1,500.

For the intrepid baby boomers who want to catch a closer glimpse of their high school faves, hang out at the Edsa Shangri-la. That's where the band will be staying.

No Piltel fumble

CONTRARY to a May 10 item here, the board of the Pilipino Telephone Corp. had already secured the necessary qualifying shares years before the just concluded stockholders' meeting.

Smart/Piltel spokesperson Ramon Isberto said the recent disclosure made by Piltel di-

COCKTALES/ B4

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BSP to regulate banks' funds transfer operations

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Phil-Data Business Systems, Inc.

MAKATI OFFICE
QUEZON CITY OFFICE

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is set to impose more stringent regulations on banks' money transfer operations and conversion charges to put more teeth into its anti-money laundering efforts.

The Philippines is being pressured to strengthen its anti-money laundering campaign as it is still on the list of the so-called "noncooperative" countries by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force, which checks against money laundering.

Money laundering refers to the process of moving proceeds from unlawful activities through the banking and financial system to make these appear to have originated from legitimate sources.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Alberto Reyes said the BSP studied the regulations on money transfer and correspondent banking relationships in other countries and would soon come up with its own blueprint.

"We'll look at money transfers, including those done over bank to another," Reyes said. "The objective is to curtail money laundering."

The BSP executive said they while banks had non-banks were currently following their internal guidelines on fund transfers, there was a need to come up with bank guidelines for the industry.

"There could be a loophole if we don't have our guidelines and if we don't look at all," Reyes said. "Other countries have stringent guidelines."

Reyes said the BSP would require a strict screening process in identifying the direct counterparties banks transfers.

"Shell companies will not be allowed. This is part of the know-your-customer policy," he stressed.

He said the regulations on funds transfers would cover not only domestic commercial banks but thrift and rural banks as well.

"All violations will be reported to the Anti-Money Laundering Council," Reyes said.

Reyes said the BSP would check the banks' compliance with the anti-money laundering law as part of its periodic examination of banks.

"This means that as part of the regular work of our examiners, they will inquire or do some testing as to random verification of suspicious deposit accounts," Reyes said.

Philippine laws against money laundering allows the government to look into any transactions involving a single, series or combination—worth at least P500,000.

Caring for corn

MINDANAWORLD

Joyi Kagan-Sison

MYEMYEHEHE! in the corn-colored mansard last year, when I was invited by Secretary Ceci Lorenzo of the Department of Agriculture to be a member of the National Corn Board.

Apparently, this must be an off-shoot of our strong advocacy on rationalizing the Japanese corn dumping Mindanao problem in Manila, where I suggested to the secretary that we focus on one or two of Mindanao's agricultural products and study the impact of the cost of shipping/transportation on the competitiveness of the end product.

I talked with the stakeholders and we all agreed that corn would be the priority concern. This started my interest in the corn sector, and in the course of the advocacy, I met a wonderful lady, who today speaks about corn with great enthusiasm. Ms. Rose Magsayo-Floro of the dropping industry is also chair of the National Corn Board.

One of the projects that we believe would greatly benefit the corn farmers, especially those from Mindanao, is the Hybrid Corn Area Expansion Program (HYCAEP) of the Department of Agriculture. Under this program, discount cards will be distributed to accredited farmers. Each card will entitle the bearer to a whopping P1,499 discount upon purchase of the hybrid corn seeds. This will encourage farmers to plant hybrid seeds which have a higher yield than the traditional open pollinated variety (OPV) seeds.

Today, the total area planted to corn is 2.3 million hectares. Of this, 1.4 million hectares are planted to hybrid, leaving with 940,000 farmers devoted to hybrid, the country will face a shortfall in food grain corn of 1 million metric tons. Secretary Ceci thought of closing the gap by first devoting 65,000 hectares this season. Of the 65,000 hectares, Mindanao will get 60,000 hectares of hybrid corn seeds (or hybrid this season and the rest. This means that the seeds subsidy program of HYCAEP will ensure yields of 7 to 8 tons per hectare (versus the OPV yields of 4 to 5 tons), and an incremental increase of P25,000 per hectare for the farmers in Mindanao.

That program which Secretary Ceci started late March, is now being implemented in "corn areas" in Mindanao. BA Globe executive Teddy Cruz-Capellan, whom I highly admire for her very "innovative" mind, was requested by us (especially me) and implementing the program. She said that a total of 72,778 farmers will become beneficiaries of the seeds subsidy in Eastern Mindanao and South Cotabato. And in several chain discount cards as of end of April. Our farmers availed of the subsidized seeds and immediately planted them. Thereby benefiting from the rains that started in Mindanao

Mindanao: Globe's growth area

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Globe Telecom, Inc. has turned its eye from the saturated Metro Manila market to Mindanao, where the firm is rapidly expanding operations.

Globe officials look to Mindanao as a growth area, where they hope to open more business avenues in the recently opened offices in Limketkai Mall here.

Business centers in the cities of Davao and Dagupan would follow suit.

Nestor Ribo, Globe regional business director for Mindanao, told the business that there are only a few cities in the region that have been in down business centers, and Cagayan de Oro is the key to be one of them.

Among the key cities in Mindanao, Ribo said, Cagayan de Oro ranks second after Davao City in terms of subscribers and revenues.

There are more than 200,000 Globe subscribers here, according to Ribo, the said that the business centers in Mindanao aimed to huge profits to be ranked among the top centers of Globe.

Cagayan de Oro City is contributing significantly to the Mindanao operations," Ribo said. "For now, we are still bullish in covering Mindanao territories."

Vincent Ong, Globe regional operations head for Visayas and Mindanao, said that the telecom firm has also been promoting the city's tourism destinations.

At present, there are 28 Globe business centers across the country. Most will soon open, Grace Casocol-Albano, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Cocktales

Continued from B3

stricter way in compliance with a new SEC-SEE rule requiring directors of listed companies to disclose their respective holdings within five working days of their election.

There have disclosure advertisements gone for the announcement that the Filed board members, majority of whom are holdovers, acquired only last month their qualifying shares.

One Filed director, Arturo Diaga Jr., even acquired his recently in 1994.

Heard through the grapevine

DAVAO, Despite unhappy over the decision of instituting and service of its premiere December Brew brand in the country, will be rolling over the subsidiaries distributorship from its long-time Philippine representative, Asia Brewery Inc.

(Email: redbeads_pdi@yahoo.com or redbeads_pdi@hotmail.com.)

"Dahil sa Pag-IBIG Fund, nalagad ang pangarap naming magkaroon ng sariling bahay. Katunayan, mas mababa pa ang monthly amortization ko ngayon sa dating upa ko sa maliit na kuwarto."

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Isa si Roderick Gomez sa 46,499 na empleyadong Pilipino na natulungan ng Pag-IBIG Fund na magkaroon ng sariling tahanan, dong nakanang taon. Dahil sa mababang loan interest rate, kayang-kaya bayaran ang monthly amortization.

Ang housing loan interest rates ng Pag-IBIG ay ang pinakamababa ngayon sa merkado, mula 6% hanggang 12% bawat taon lamang, depende sa halaga ng iyong nautang.

Ito ang sagot ng pamunuan ni PRESIDENT GLORIA sa kahilingan ng marami nating kababayan – isang programa sa pabahay na abot-kaya ng lahat.

Si GMA at Pag-IBIG Fund, katuwang n'yo sa kinabukasan.

http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph

DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

ADB to lend $40M to SMEs

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE ASIAN Development Bank is amenable to granting $40 million worth of loans to help develop the country's small and medium enterprises sector.

The Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SB Corp.) requested the loan package, which it planned to use for discounted lending to SMEs.

SB Corp. is an attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry tasked with providing easy and cheap credit access to small and medium scale enterprises.

SB Corp. said the bulk of the loan package worth $25 million was intended for wholesale lending to banks, which will in turn open lending facilities to SME borrowers.

Another $15 million will be lent to the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency to help exporters.

Consultants of the ADB earlier gave their nod to the loan request by SB Corp.

The group of consultants, composed of UH Institute and C. Main and Associates Inc., recommended the loan approval to the ADB.

SB Corp. is now seeking the approval of the National Credit Council for it to secure the loan from the ADB.

"SB Corp. can viably implement the project and has the financial capability to pay the loan, as manifested in the manner the corporation has managed to service its debts in the past," said SB Corp. chair Estrella Bautista Alunan in a letter to the NCC.

SB Corp. has been tapped by Malacañang to pursue the national government's SME development agenda.

The corporation provides assistance to SMEs either through direct lending or by providing credit guarantee.

One of the services of SB Corp. is the SME PRATT or Financing for receivables suppliers transaction.

The program is aimed at providing loans that will be used by SMEs to sustain their operations while they collect their receivables from clients.

Beneficiaries of these loans are suppliers to supermarkets and department stores, which normally take months before they pay their suppliers.

Napocor gets $73-M coal supply deal

By Abigail L. Ho

THE NATIONAL National Power Corp. has secured a "firm commitment" from a Chinese supplier to provide $72.8 million worth of coal.

The supply deal would take care of the bulk of Napocor's coal requirements for the year.

A highly placed source revealed that a Chinese firm had committed 16 shipments of 65,000 tons each of coal at $70 per ton.

The source declined to name the coal supplier, however, as a final contract had yet to be signed.

"But it's a firm commitment already. We're just waiting for a (Department of Justice) opinion. After that, we can already sign the contract," he said.

The 16-shipment contract would translate into more than 1 million tons of coal, which would be used to meet the requirements of coal-fired plants in Sual, Masinloc and Pagbilao.

Another seven shipments of coal worth $27.3 million more also expected to be delivered to the country within the year, the source said.

Napocor was able to secure a $60-per-ton deal with some Indonesian suppliers for seven shipments of coal at 65,000 tons per shipment.

Aside from these committed coal shipments, the source said negotiations were also ongoing with two more Chinese mining firms for the supply of an extra 2.5 million metric tons of coal to last Napocor up to the end of the year.

"Around 4 million tons of coal are needed up to the end of the year. The remaining coal requirements will probably be sourced from the two Chinese firms that are currently negotiating with Napocor," the source said.

No price had been set for the two possible coal contracts, he said.

The source said the committed coal shipments came as a result of Napocor president Rogelio Murga's trips to China and Indonesia to personally look for supplies.

In an interview, Murga said it had become increasingly difficult to look for coal sources as China itself was sucking up almost all of the coal that it mines were producing.

Coal prices had also been going up because of the huge Chinese demand, he said.

Over the last months, he said price increases were not expected to let up, even as China had said it would now adopt a slower pace in terms of economic growth.

Napocor also gets a small part of its coal requirements, around 40,000 tons a month, from the local coal mines in Semirara.

Semirara coal is mixed with imported coal before it is used to fuel the country's coal-fired power plants.

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500,000 - 999,999	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50	8.00
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The Westin Philippine Plaza

SEC calls on listed firms to boost role of directors

By Elizabeth L. Tandoc

THE CORPORATE watchdog is urging listed firms to increase participation of independent directors to comply with prevailing standards among stock exchanges abroad.

As part of a general blueprint to speed up the permitted merchant banking financial firms, such as mutual funds, personal firms, investment houses and insurance companies among others, the Securities and Exchange Commission proposed a number of measures.

This proposal, among others, aims to be responsive to the needs of issuers and investors with the increased participation of independent directors in governing boards.

The governing structures should reflect participation from retail investors, corporations raising capital and others using the nation's capital markets, the SEC proposed.

The SEC also plans to strengthen disclosure-based regulation where organizations will sponsor training and accreditation programs are prepared for transactions international standards of accounting. It is also hoping that enforcement procedures will be strengthened to ensure effective prosecution of serious violations of financial reporting laws, particularly on fraudulent sales or trading practices.

This initiative may include training supervisory officials from businessmen through special sorts, specialized training for judiciary and prosecutors on capital market crimes such as insider trading, market manipulations and sales (financial) schemes, and ensuring that regulations and self regulatory organizations have access to financial records including bank records needed to complete effective investigations of fortune-making violations.

It was also proposed that liability of secondary insiders be enhanced by expanding participation of retail investors through intermediated channel programs.

Also, efforts would be exerted to bring "worthy" companies to the local capital market through public offering of securities.

This initiative will include the passage of legislation to modernize regulatory structures affecting the sector such as the Revised Investment Company Act, as updated to recognize Credit, an updated Pre-Need code, the Personal Equity Retirement Account and the Corporate Recovery Act.

SEC also proposed that alternative strategies for promoting growth of small and mid-size companies be identified along with the private sector to step these companies to list in the stock market.

Smart claims 15M subscribers as of end-April

By Clarissa S. Bautista

SMART Communications Inc. over the weekend claimed that wireless subscribers to its network have reached more than 15 million as of end-April, up from 14.4 million by the end of the first quarter.

Napoleon Nazareno, Smart president, said that subscriber take-up increased substantially in April after both Smart and Talk 'N Text, the cellular phone brand of its affiliate Pilipino Telephone Corp.

A Smart official said that their active subscribers increased to 21 million in the first four months.

"I can't give you exact figures, but we are way past the figure already," said Nazareno when asked to confirm the 21-million subscribed level. He said that they passed the 20-million mark by end-April.

The services subsidiaries of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., parent firm of Smart and PRTC, represent 38 percent of the total mobile phone user base—46 percent for Smart and 11 percent for Talk 'N Text.

Rizal

The glory of our democracy

IN THE midst of charges and countercharges of wrongdoing in last week's elections, let us not forget to look to the glory of our democracy. Our elections, even the one of last week, are the crudest instrument of the Filipino people.

Say what you will about our erstwhile American colonizers, but they taught us how to govern ourselves in the democratic way less than two decades after Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. As a result, the Philippines has been holding democratic elections since the early 1900s. In our part of the world, this record is unmatched. No country comes even close.

The Filipino woman earned her right to vote almost from the beginning of our republic. Again, this record is unmatched in Asia. In fact, today, women are not still allowed to vote in some parts of the world.

Oh, sure, our democracy is sour, almost deafening, especially during elections. This is because from the earliest days of our democracy, the opposition has always been strong. We do not just cut down down the opposition, even if Government. This is the essence of democracy.

I do not envy the news editors in Singapore where the opposition does not even seem to exist. Elections in that quiet, dull, city-state? What the nation's second most powerful person is in jail for life because the Son exchanges blow-jobs, citizens will keep their mouths shut. The military junta in Myanmar (formerly Burma) is right out of the Middle Ages. Indonesia, with its Islamic fundamentalists, is in constant turmoil. Thailand is fortunate that the royal family stabilizes the country.

The violence during our elections is something to be ashamed of. But, I suspect those killings are over who will control the jueteng, smuggling, or the racketeering. If these elections are over who will control the jueteng, smuggling, or the racketeering. If these elections are over who will control the jueteng, smuggling, or the racketeering. If these elections

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RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION

Cottonwood Heights
Antipolo, Rizal

Lot area	Price	DP
200 sqm.	₱300,000.00	₱30,000.00
212 sqm.	₱315,000.00	₱31,500.00
240 sqm.	₱1,064,000.00	₱106,400.00
258 sqm.	₱1,075,000.00	₱107,500.00
300 sqm.	₱1,275,000.00	₱127,500.00
320 sqm.	₱1,376,000.00	₱137,600.00
333 sqm.	₱1,344,255.00	₱134,425.50
375 sqm.	₱1,575,000.00	₱157,500.00
413 sqm.	₱1,735,800.00	₱173,580.00
456 sqm.	₱1,748,200.00	₱174,820.00

Foliage Hills
Antipolo, Rizal

Lot area	Price	DP
175 sqm.	₱700,000.00	₱70,000.00
187 sqm.	₱823,000.00	₱82,300.00
202 sqm.	₱888,000.00	₱88,800.00
210 sqm.	₱894,000.00	₱89,400.00
240 sqm.	₱1,092,000.00	₱109,200.00

Hills of Wala Alta
Antipolo, Rizal

Lot area	Price	DP
154 sqm.	₱627,000.00	₱62,700.00
174 sqm.	₱748,000.00	₱74,800.00
208 sqm.	₱897,000.00	₱89,700.00
240 sqm.	₱960,000.00	₱96,000.00
252 sqm.	₱1,127,200.00	₱112,720.00
280 sqm.	₱1,165,440.00	₱116,544.00
324 sqm.	₱1,238,568.00	₱123,856.80
351 sqm.	₱1,264,600.00	₱126,460.00

Manila Southwood Residential Estate
Carmona, Cavite

Lot area	Price	DP
675 sqm.	₱1,350,000.00	₱135,000.00
696 sqm.	₱1,435,200.00	₱143,520.00
234 sqm.	₱1,511,055.00	₱151,105.50
920 sqm.	₱1,915,360.00	₱191,536.00
959 sqm.	₱1,946,570.00	₱194,657.00

Palacio Real Subdivision
Calamba, Laguna

Lot area	Price	DP
80 sqm.	₱309,000.00	₱30,900.00
152 sqm.	₱465,000.00	₱46,500.00
160 sqm.	₱480,000.00	₱48,000.00
200 sqm.	₱520,000.00	₱52,000.00
225 sqm.	₱622,125.00	₱62,212.50
252 sqm.	₱696,150.00	₱69,615.00
264 sqm.	₱730,680.00	₱73,068.00
339 sqm.	₱823,500.00	₱82,350.00
324 sqm.	₱831,600.00	₱83,160.00
332 sqm.	₱840,000.00	₱84,000.00
440 sqm.	₱968,000.00	₱96,800.00
559 sqm.	₱1,433,000.00	₱143,300.00

AVANT
Bacoor, Cavite

Lot area	Price	DP
80 sqm.	₱362,770.00	₱36,277.10
105 sqm.	₱507,871.00	₱50,787.10
131 sqm.	₱570,522.00	₱57,052.27
168 sqm.	₱629,284.81	₱62,928.48
179 sqm.	₱814,850.50	₱81,448.05
306 sqm.	₱930,000.00	₱93,000.00

RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM

Biltmore Tower
Legaspi Village, Makati

Lot area	Price	DP
72.64 sqm.	₱4,468,160.00	₱446,816.00
83.13 sqm.	₱5,114,000.00	₱511,400.00
87.61 sqm.	₱5,390,000.00	₱539,000.00
137.1 sqm.	₱8,416,000.00	₱841,600.00

Palm Tower
St. Paul St. San Antonio Village, Makati

Lot area	Price	DP
30.00 sqm.	₱900,000.00	₱90,000.00
35.39 sqm.	₱1,215,708.00	₱121,570.80
50.34 sqm.	₱1,477,294.00	₱147,729.40
63.31 sqm.	₱1,918,320.00	₱191,832.00
83.39 sqm.	₱1,838,960.00	₱183,896.00
83.39 sqm.	₱1,838,960.00	₱183,896.00
83.39 sqm.	₱1,838,960.00	₱183,896.00
104.81 sqm.	₱2,309,145.31	₱230,914.74
87.57 sqm.	₱1,930,400.00	₱193,040.00
101.97 sqm.	₱2,280,868.00	₱228,086.80
101.99 sqm.	₱2,802,178.00	₱280,217.80

Ark Condominium
Sierra Madre St. Mandaluyong

Lot area	Price	DP
82.32 sqm.	₱1,488,528.00	₱148,852.80
125.48 sqm.	₱2,268,448.00	₱226,844.80

Chateau de Baie
Roxas Blvd.

Lot area	Price	DP
137 sqm.	₱4,931,200.00	₱493,120.00
158 sqm.	₱5,928,000.00	₱592,800.00

RESIDENTIAL TOWN HOUSE

Isabella Place
Hobart Subdivision, Fairview, Q.C.

Lot area	Price	DP
80 sqm.	₱1,868,284.00	₱186,828.40
87 sqm.	₱2,032,980.00	₱203,298.00
146 sqm.	₱3,702,910.00	₱370,291.00

Dionisio Royale Executive Homes
Greenville Subdivision, Q.C.

Lot area	Price	DP
84 sqm.	₱1,890,000.00	₱189,000.00

VJ Town House
Pandacan City

Lot area	Price	DP
120 sqm.	₱3,600,000.00	₱360,000.00

OFFICE CONDOMINIUM

Ark Condominium
Mandaluyong

Lot area	Price	DP
21.12 sqm.	₱573,840.00	₱57,384.00
37.17 sqm.	₱1,016,100.00	₱101,610.00

Palm Tower
St. Paul St. San Antonio Village, Makati

Lot area	Price	DP
15.19 sqm.	₱456,712.00	₱45,671.20
17.80 sqm.	₱534,198.00	₱53,419.80
19.68 sqm.	₱600,129.00	₱60,012.90
22.29 sqm.	₱712,800.00	₱71,280.00
22.59 sqm.	₱1,041,600.00	₱104,160.00
30.28 sqm.	₱1,395,150.00	₱139,515.00
31.10 sqm.	₱1,432,120.00	₱143,212.00
30.29 sqm.	₱1,527,200.00	₱152,720.00
102 sqm.	₱5,227,810.00	₱522,781.00

Atlanta Center
Annapolis St., Greenhills

Lot area	Price	DP
19.21 sqm.	₱1,248,650.00	₱124,865.00
80.67 sqm.	₱5,200,215.00	₱520,021.50
90.83 sqm.	₱5,725,362.00	₱572,536.20
113.40 sqm.	₱6,915,396.00	₱691,539.60
132.15 sqm.	₱8,078,880.00	₱807,888.00
150.75 sqm.	₱9,209,520.00	₱920,952.00
150.80 sqm.	₱7,540,417.00	₱754,041.70
177.27 sqm.	₱8,865,850.00	₱886,585.00

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Meralco-Napocor deal to raise electricity rates

Watchdog fears burden will fall on consumers

By Abigail L. Ho

CONSUMER watchdog National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reliable Power (Nasecore) is opposing a tolling agreement between the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. and the National Power Corp., saying this would translate into additional burden for consumers.

The group said the joint settlement agreement that the two firms filed with the Energy Regulatory Commission last month could push up electricity rates by 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) as payments that Meralco would have to remit to Napocor would be passed on to consumers.

Under the joint settlement agreement, Meralco should pay Napocor around P20 billion (at 91.31 per kWh), minus adjustments, for undrawn electricity under their 10-year power supply contract.

The 10-year contract states that Meralco should draw 90,000 million kWh of electricity from Napocor, with a minimum 5,000 megawatts starting 2004.

But out of the P20 billion, Meralco will pay only P10 billion over a five-year period as the P6 billion falls under some of the adjustments that Napocor will have to pay the Lopez-led firm.

These adjustments include provisions for transmission delays and delays in issuance of committee's directly connected to Napocor.

Napocor and Meralco had a third-party mediation process done early last year where their discussions on the validity of the supply contract bogged down. The contract would lapse by year's end.

Nasecore president Wen Dugat said in a statement that passing on to consumers the costs of its payments to Napocor was "unconscionable" as it was a unilateral decision on the part of the power distributor not to draw electricity from Napocor as stated in their 10-year power supply contract.

Meralco claimed that its electricity consumption forecasts did not materialize, prompting it not to draw the required amount of electricity from Napocor as their rate to demand anyway.

"Meralco's claim that the forecast allowed of energy consumption for its franchise area failed to materialize should be rejected by the ERC. This is a business risk that Meralco has to face and accept as part of any business operation. Meralco should realize that there is no business that is risk free," he said.

He added that the power supply contract was a "private agreement" between the two parties, so anything that would prevent either of the parties from fulfilling their end of the agreement should be their sole responsibility and not anyone else's.

After under the settlement agreement, Napocor agreed Meralco that there would be a "timely dispatch" of the power distributor's independent power producers (IPPs) at mutually agreed levels over 2002-2004. Approximate adjustments would then be made for any delays.

The financial benefits that Meralco would reap if its IPPs run at minimum energy quantities (MEQ) would then be passed on to consumers. Savings to be generated from this was pegged at around 25 centavos per kWh.

Gov't wants to turn UP into a Silicon Valley

By Susan W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT is pushing for the development of the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City, into an academic-industrial enclave much like Silicon Valley in the United States, according to Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima.

The official said last week UP Diliman was being endowed to host a proposed information technology zone—a building that would facilitate collaboration between industries and the academe.

Data from the DTI show that the agency is endorsing for Malacañang's approval the construction of a six-story building with a total floor area of 13,500 square meters.

So far, the country has 18 IT parks and buildings including the Robinson's Equitable PCIBank Tower business and office tower, The Enterprise Center, Philamlife Tower and Eastwood Park.

The proposal, for an IT building within the state university, prompted some in the ranks of Nationalists Watch, which declared a portion of the campus as an IT park.

Signed last March 16, the presidential proclaimed that the IT park covered a 500,000-square meter (about 5 hectares) parcel of land along C.P. Garcia Road.

"This is a big breakthrough because this is how Silicon Valley (in California) and the academic-industrial areas in the Boston (in Massachusetts) area started," Purisima said.

He was referring to the rise of strong industries, largely information technology based, through the synergy of capital from businesses and expertise from the academe.

To raise revenues amid a perennial shortage of funds from Congress, the state university also has been pushing for its Commonwealth Property Development Project it adopted in 1997.

DTI, OMB team up to take RP off IPR violators' list

By Beatriz M. Dumlao

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry and the Optical Media Board (OMB) will be directing officials to remove the country from the list of intellectual property rights violators.

Trade Secretary Cesar S. Purisima said that the two agencies are studying ways to help industry players adopt self-policing measures to comply with intellectual property laws.

"We want to push for institutional changes similar to what was initiated between the Contact Center Association of the Philippines and the Business Software Alliance," Purisima said.

The official was referring to an agreement adopted last month, which allowed the auditing of computers systems used by contact center firms to check whether these were licensed to install software in police raids.

The trade chief also said that OMB chair Ede Marasigan had initiated plans of convening mall owners to monitor their tenants who may be selling pirated products.

"I'm also asking the OMB and the Intellectual Property Office to come up with an 'award' that would serve as a seal of good housekeeping for mall operators," Purisima said.

Early this month, the IPR chief announced that the government would mount a more vigorous campaign to protect property rights after the United States government put the country on its watch list of IPR violators under the so-called Special 301 Report.

"Our request to the US amount to a range of $600 million to $700 million a year," Purisima said last week. "The country has been in the list for three years and we can lose some benefits because of this."

On the other hand, Purisima had said that the US government appreciated the passage in Congress of a law that would help fight pirates of optical media or video discs.

PNB, Allied Bank to sell insurance products

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank and Allied Banking Corp., have secured the approval of the Insurance Commission to venture into bancassurance or the selling of insurance products.

Alberto Ocampo, IC deputy governor for bank supervision and examination, said the policy-making Monetary Board had approved the application of the two banks to offer the products of specific insurance companies.

Ocampo said PNB would be allowed to distribute only the products of its non-life subsidiary PNB General Insurance Co., and life insurance affiliate PNB Beneficial Life Insurance.

PNB owns 40 percent of PNB Beneficial Life Insurance.

On the part of Allied Bank, it will only be allowed to sell the products of affiliate New York Life Insurance Philippines, where it owns 12.5 percent stake, Belen said.

PNB and Allied Bank have a common shareholder in tobacco magnate Lucio Tan, but PNB is partly government-owned.

While skimming profits were the last few years, more banks in Asia are going into bancassurance as the cross-selling of financial products to their existing clientele gives them fresh opportunities to broaden fee and commission-based income.

Tapping into bancassurance thus allows banks to hedge against volatile interest rate spreads.

China Bank net profits up 6.2%

CHINA Banking Corp., now majority owned by retail magnate Henry Sy, reported a 6.2% growth increase in net profits in 2Q17 million in the first quarter from a year ago.

The bank said its interest income expanded by 3.76 percent as income from loans made up for the decline in low-risk investments securities while interest expense declined by 13.48 percent due to lower deposit rating rates.

Its return on equity stood at 19.9% percent, higher than 16.62 percent in the same period last year, again one of the very few local banks that reported a double-digit ROE.

The capital to risk-assets ratio of Chinabank stood at 28.78 percent during the period.

The bank said interest income from loans grew by 27.57 percent as demand for loans started to pick up, coupled with higher lending rates.

"This correspondingly led to a drop in income from trading and investment securities by 13.89 percent as low funds were invested in high-yielding securities and BOB's (Republic of the Philippines bonds)," the bank reported.

Sy's SM group raised its buyout of the Wachovers group's 32.68 percent stake in Chinabank for P2.26 billion last Thursday, thus raising the group's stake to about 54 percent.

Sy also owns Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

Doris C. Dumlao

Questions ...

From page B7

is screwed into a voting center with about 40 precincts. I arrived at precinct 175 at about **ten in the morning. The precincts were bustling** with about a thousand voters. It seemed everybody was there, the young and the old, the starter and his servant, the fair and the infirm. A few came in their wheelchairs. We filled in our ballots as long tables. In one dimming moment everybody was equal. The rich and the poor had one vote each.

In my precinct, I found out that the voter's list still included the name of my wife although she (more) than three years ago. The names of the couple next door were also still on the list although they passed away last year. This probably partly explains why Comelec says the turnout was not as high as in previous elections.

It then occurred to me that, because of our universal system of education, which is unmatched in the region, everybody who was there could read and write. And I asked myself, how many countries in the Third World could say this? In fact, there are countries—Gulf oil states—where the names of the candidates are replaced by symbols because many of the voters are illiterate. But not in my neighborhood. And because it was in the far-flung barrios of the land. In the remote villages, to be able to vote is, in fact, a status symbol, because this status says it forever enough to write the names of the candidates.

And no stop bothering. We can be justly proud of the glory of our democracy.

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Baguio, one more time

By Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo
Contributor

LAST April was Baguio season in capital.

I go there every year as part of the teaching staff of the National Writers' Workshop held by the UP Institute of Creative Writing, which for years held there every summer since 1999. This year there was another reason for going: We were opening a branch of the UP Writers' Residences inside the campus of UP Baguio. And the new week, the family was coming up for a holiday.

Not that one needs an excuse to go to Baguio. Everyone cops about the pollution and the overcrowding and the lack of planning—not to mention the unlivability of the summer—but I know very few people who'll turn down an invitation to go up there, for golf opens, for conferences, or look for handguiro, to visit such friends, whenever. Baguio occupies a special place in both memory and imagination... like Quiapo or the Manila Bay.

Of course, it is a far cry from the Summer City of Pines that I was first brought to as a little girl, bundled up in a thick jacket, and mittened by hands to keep them warm, and wondering at how my breath came out in little puffs of smoke when I laughed. The most recent and biggest change to come into his girl's-for the recently-opened SM mall. Since it occupies downtown Baguio's highest point, it is the ubiquitous presence. One can't get away from it. Everywhere one goes, one looks up and sees it. And because it looks like every other SM structure in the country—cheap

MORE C2

Baguio, one more time

UP Baguio chancellor Percy Macaraeg assisting UP president Clodualdo Marcaida in cutting the ribbon

[illegible]

[illegible] horizontal box with the letters "SM" displayed prominently on its façade...it stoke our like the proverbial sore thumb, but doesn't help (but perched on top of it is what looks like an undersized white hat, I asked Percy Macaraeg, chancellor of UP Baguio, whether it was the latest in skyscraper architecture, or a sort of gesture toward the local ethnic culture (did it resemble the roof of a highland hut?) but she said she didn't know.

My younger colleagues and the workshop's writing fellows couldn't be expected to remember what used to occupy the spot on which SM now stands, the elegant old Pines Hotel, epitome of the grace and serenity that was part of the charm of the Baguio of old. But even they were dismayed at the sight of SM.

I actually have no objections to SM setting up in Baguio, or anywhere else for that matter. Rightly or wrongly, SM represents progress for many Filipinos. And at the very least who can argue with the convenience of one-stop shopping? But it surely could have been designed to take full advantage of its location, to be in harmony with sky and hills and trees, hence to become more integral of Burnham landscape.

Judging from the traffic around it, the whole local population—plus the tourists (who, one would have thought, would have had enough of Metro Manila's malls)—had apparently converged there. A week earlier, Eddy de Ungria, also a workshop panelist, had gone to see "The Passion of Christ" there. And many of the other panelists, like Joel Garcia and Butch Dalisay, had taken coffee at Pizza's. We panelists for the second week, per agreement...for a while.

Feeling the pressure

Area has SM's presence affected the city's small businesses? we asked Percy. Too soon to tell, she said, but at least two established ones are feeling the pressure—the smaller malls, Burnham Mall, before the Cathedral, and Mission Square near the market. All the shops are moving to SM, which has made them an offer they can't refuse—much lower rent.

So why set up a new bookstore, when Nacional, the biggest bookstore chain, is right up there in the new super mall? Well, for one thing, the biggest bookstore chain's patrons do not have local publishers. If one's books don't sell a certain number of copies a month (though it hasn't been made clear just how many one is supposed to sell), one is asked to pull the book out. The stock in trade of an academic publishing house like the UP [illegible] and Ateneo tilted to not exactly fast-moving items. So we can't keep our titles on the shelves for long. It's a "Catch-22" situation, for if buyers don't see the book, and therefore don't know it exists, how will they buy it?

The solution: Put up your own bookstore. UP Baguio was delighted to have us. Chancellor Percy made space for us in her brand new [illegible] de La Rama Building, and pit professor Benjie Mariano (director of the Institute of Management) in charge of it. And Benjie, who is a rare combination of manager and artist, worked with Nikki Balangue (the UP Press deputy director for marketing) to set up a charming little establishment.

And in April we opened our doors to the public, with UP president Francisco Nemenzo cutting the ribbon, and several university officials in attendance—chancellor Percy, VP for administration Manila Gregorio, AVP for public affairs Priscilla Supnet, director of the UP Institute of Creative Writing Vim Nadera, the UP Baguio faculty and, of course, the teaching staff and the writing fellows of the UP Writers' Workshop. Jimmy Abad recited a blessing for the bookstore, which was actually a poem by Dylan Thomas. And then everyone—including president Nemenzo—moved to Café Legarda for the workshop's graduation rites.

A special guest at the graduation dinner was the artist Botong, who earlier that week had taken us to his farm in Asin. Now, there's something that the 300 people should have visited before packing up their bedding. Carved into a hillside, the farm looks more like a set of smallscreen gardens, complete with its own little waterfall and natural watering hole, a goat, a monkey, a peacock and his peahen, a flock of ducks, assorted butterflies and birds and bees, rice and coffee and lemon, rosemary and mint, basil and horseradish. Even Apol Tup—who has a fear of heights and had trouble negotiating the

TONY and Joy Hidalgo with artists Malang and Botong at the Café by the Ruins

THE WRITING fellows with more panelists and special guests (second row from left) Marie Michel Jimmy Abad, Kirp Yuson, Rio Alma'rio, Jing Hidalgo, Karlo Delgado; (third row, left) Paulo Marasigan and Vim Nadera; (far right) Kidlat Tahimik and Baroness Lilia Barretto standing, far right.

UP president Francisco Nemenzo browsing through the bookstore's collection

PART of the UP Writers' Workshop panelists: Joi Barrios, Butch Macaraeg, National Artist Rio Alma'rio, Ron Medina, J. Neil Garcia, Ricky de Ungria, Estrella Bonifacio, Carla Pacis

THE NEWLY opened UP Press Bookstore in UP Baguio

DR. Abdullah T. Madale delivers the keynote lecture during the PEN Annual Conference. Seated are Isagani Cruz, Rose Lee, PEN president; Conor Unpa, MSU-IIT chancellor Marcelo P. Galvan, project director Christine Godinez-Ortega and Rotsi Jacob

VISITORS and teacher participants

PEN conference tackles Christian-Muslim clash of civilizations

By Jenaida Ma. Guerrero
Photos by Christine Godinez-Ortega
PEN Mindanao Bureau

LITERATURE emerged into social history the clash of cultures and the need for unity between Christians and Muslims in the annual conference of the Philippine Center for International PEN (Poets Essayists Novelists), held recently at the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology in Iligan City.

The theme of the conference was "Convivencia/Coexist: A Shared Future."

Keynote speaker Abdullah Madale, a scholar, is also has been working for peace in Mindanao, set the tone for the gathering when he said that Muslims "recognize the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ as a great prophet, as is Mohammed, the messenger of Allah. There are parallels between Jesus and Mohammed, and there sacrifices."

Dr. Madale added, "There are commonalities between the two great religions. The common grounds should unite us, but unfortunately this is not the case..." He also called attention to the war in Iraq, where "one person (the US) is playing one (Muslim) group against the other."

Cebuano poet Erlinda Alburo recalled that short stories during the 1970s promoted Christian-Muslim unity because "those provoked good propaganda for the martial law regime." This has been revived recently, sometimes in comical form, in Cebu. But it is still "exotica, entertainment," Alburo said.

Some of the stories discussed were about labour, like Muslim women falling in love with Christian men, imbeding soldiers. "So how do we portray them (Muslim women) realistically yet sympathetically?" asked Alburo about every writer Mindanao Tin." "The treatment in fiction is pursuing (like) don't get entangled with the Moro..."

A young writer in the audience called for an institute of the conference in what he had written for his campus journal: a short story about a Muranao sympathizing, and one who enjoyed being Gay. This had infuriated Muranao males at school, who threatened the author.

Historian Rudy Rodil and the writer of the story should have been more sensitive. Feminist Charlson Ong asked: "Why did she have to be a Muranao? Why a good boy (well defended). But if you weren't just to be controversial..."

Conference convener Isagani Cruz was more blunt: "We have no business writing about a Muranao woman because you are not a Muranao woman!"

Bias against women

Panelist Irma Cuizon raised another issue: the unequal status of women in Muslim society. "This has to do with the Koran..." she pointed out.

Speaker Calbi Isaacs observed that "Ulos not in the community as a Tausug. Not low Muslim status. We have been (one) defending ourselves politically... personally I blame the Spaniards for this. Muslims are marginalized in all aspects; blame persist. There is need to respect each other's culture."

Isaacs added, "Religion is very divisive. That's something we have to live with. The latter we can get rid of biases, the former for all of us. The moment you ask what is your religion, there's a wall..."

Playwright-actress Aurora Nuñez summarized this insight from her play "Muslims and Christians are one but they will fight to the end to be different, and still a religion."

Ong said there is a growing trend ("the time has come"), with more Muslim writers in English, "and they write with a certain consciousness, a consciousness of being 10 times."

During the open forum, one woman participant, a Muslim, said Christian-Muslim unity "is an idea, probably a dream." The two groups are among uncomfortable with one another, so their interaction remains put it. But, "as we look for common grounds, despite diversity, we can unite as Filipinos."

The Muslim ethno-linguistic groups are not that united, for this matter. "We cannot agree among ourselves," one Muslim participant noted. "We have to finish this civil before we can move on. That goes for the nation as a whole."

Keynote speaker Madale spoke for all when he declared that "there are good and bad Christians, and good and bad Muslims." Another conclusion from the PEN conference is that, based on what has happened and what is happening in the country, writers should now create a new culture.

IPAG performs "Tatu sa Isa (Three Peoples and One Island)"

IPAG welcomes PEN writers in congress with a traditional Mindanao dance.

Baguio, one more time

Please page C2

many helpers—agreed that it was the perfect setting for the Traditional Mansions which thereby hopes to set up real soon.

While we must travel the new SM, the artist shrugged and suggested that we go instead to Kelly Schmidt's new place, on the fifth floor of La Azotea on Session Road, right above Pizzeria Cafe, where we go to listen to the singer/band, who were performing until he/she called On Call. Kelly himself turned up during the Workshop Sellers' Night at O Bliss Klass (where the Mongolian barbecue is still terrific and the best dessert is what the Intercon Line Delivers calls "Submarine cake"), and offered to take us there on terms, and found it delightful, a piece of installation art in itself: studio cum theatre cum gallery cum music room. And in one corner, overlooking the city, is a veggie outfit, called, what else, O My Gulay!

Definitely more interesting that SM.

Quiet evenings

In the midst of his multifarious chores as dean of the humanities at the UB (Kelly Ilustrado found time to invite us to his lovely home for one of those long quiet evenings, with everyone rushing up to his favorite corner, with a glass of wine or a glass of coffee, to listen to music, or read to the latest reads, or look at the handmade books that Kelly sometimes finds the time to produce, or gossip (really) with her. It's become like a kind of pilgrimage, this yearly visit to Kelly's place. And each year, we bring someone new who quickly becomes a convert. (This time around it was the Philippines Free Press' Paolo Abiva Jr.)

And we found time to hunt down Isabel, off Dominican Hill Road, site of those little places with plenty of character and great food, tucked away in one of the city's narrow backstreets. And we hop into stalls and dried flowers in the Baguio markets.

At the stroke of, Tony and our daughters came up, and we went to all our favorite haunts. The Pink Sisters still sound like angels. The Igu (a stag) at the Rose Hotel is still delicious. As are the aloe jam at the Good Shepherd's convent and the soups and salads and the fresh strawberries at the Café by the Ruins (where we ran into friends again, having lunch with Bishop and Esther!) As are the rainbow sweaters in Wet Dry, and the wood and glass at PMFI. Mines View Park no longer has a view but you can buy practically everything, including small potted plants, in its multi-level lungay. The drinks and Mario, the singer at the lobby bar of the Manor in John Hay, are still good, but the staff in skirts up to their navel is used to be—another Old saxuality perhaps. And the Tele Diner has lost the vintage ad (mounted over the doorway, ex-Jabidoh, the framed black and white photos of Lana Turner and Humphrey Bogart, and was now called MY Diner). And though the sweetmeats were still to-die-for and roller-skaters, the food was simply awful!

But it was where we made our usual stop at St. Louis that we got our biggest disappointment. The silver shop was no more. The security guard pointed us to a shabby building down the road, where he said some of the shop's old people had gone. And we did go, and in a dimly lit cubbyhole, we did in fact find one of the little old ladies who had attended the store in St. Louis, standing behind a counter containing what looked like what was left of the old stock. The old Belgian items had retired, she said, and so had some of the old craftsmen. But she and some of the men who still seemed to go on practicing their trade, had decided to set up for themselves, had here-she was. And such facilities was as perfect as it ever was—as much here than anything one might find in any of the other silver places (including Bay, which has packed up its process, by my daughters and I went on a buying spree and nearly finished up her stock.

But my heart was heavy. The loss of the St. Louis silver shop...to which my mother had first taken my sister and me one foggy morning, to buy little silver rings with filigreed crosses...seemed to prefigure the fate of the Baguio that I knew and love.

Never mind, Tony said, let's go for a walk. And we did. And we caught the afternoon through the trees of the Koran, and the pine fragrance and the bird song. And I thought, maybe it's not so bad. As long as there's this...and Bencab and Kidlat Tahimik and Eddie Tuliao...the old Baguio still endures.

'Blasted' art at UFO

"WICK"

By James P Ong
Contributor

THE UNVEILED viewing room of the newly opened UFO Gallery in San Juan is the perfect backdrop for "The Blasted Aesthetic and Emotions," a dark, purely emotional collection that represents on the artist's interest in "invented customs, laws and rituals."

Sergio Bumatay III, would rather not provide a synthesis for his bizarre conceptual exhibit because "I view it to the viewer, for them to have a final say." But it does offer these three words as guideposts: "Love. Trauma. Primal."

Bumatay's works are a mix of paintings, sculptures and installations accumulated over two years of steady work. "The Hell of Mail," a large black canvas, is a spontaneous clubbing of paint and human hair.

"It's like a madman making a person," he explains. "I consider this work as the visual equivalent of a mark of a poet named Gin Galoy who would write his love verses inside the LRT."

The artist likes to work with found objects and what his body produces: saliva, hair, fingernails and, in the case of "Statue," sperm. "I don't know whether or not people are ready to come into terms with our human instincts; our body waste is who we are."

"The Thing," on the other hand, a melted styrofoam, resembling a rock, growing human hair. It's his attempt "to diminish the distinction between the natural and the artificial, our world and the unknown."

Spirituality is also a theme explored in the exhibit. "Witch" is an installation of a bone, a book on demonology and moving tools; it's a well-piece altar that, explains the artist, reflects man's desire to connect with the divinity within him. "And through learning, one could be a witch in his own room."

"Open" is a mixed-media piece about leaving "the corporeal world for the spiritual, basis for existence" and a living-on-a-working door.

"Blasted Aesthetic and Emotions" is Bumatay's effort to explore psychological outlets and to question spirituality—both in his own and other people's.

One painting, "Cabal," was done after he saw that word written on an attached friend was screaming.

"He had thrown words written on a tiny piece of paper and tied it around his wrist for protection from bad entities," Bumatay rationalizes. "I find it illogical; it's like you're playing with witch-hunting."

By examining past experiences and "subtitle ideas" out of his system, Bumatay succeeds in blasting us with an incoherent, bold show that refuses to be defined.

"Blasted Aesthetic and Emotions" runs until May 31 at UFO Gallery, Tuesday–Saturday, 12:30–7:30 p.m., at 40 Arnaiz St., Addition Hills, San Juan. Call 7260000.

"OPEN"

Ruiz tackles virtual world in West exhibit

"LEVEL 3," by Ronaldo Ruiz

HEKEDU and Rhea de la Rosa's paintings involve the three main subjects PJ (flower, fish, horse). Their works show realism in brushstrokes and semi-impressionism in color. They are realistic in the sense that they project immediate sensations. They will exhibit their works on May 20-31 in Galeria V, 61, Bldg. A, EM Magsaysay. Call 6342794.

VISUAL ARTS

"POLARIS 30" L," by Alex Villareal

THE COUNTRY's leading furniture makers and exporters like Majore Woodcraft, Inc. will join the 26th Philippine Furniture Festival, "Interior Design Challenge," on May 29-31 at the Magsaysay Hall 3, EM Magsaysay. Majore's products are said to top stores in the US like Ethan Allen Furniture International, EJ Victor, Vanguard Furniture's, Highland House and Franklin Plaza. The festival is organized by the Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines.

UST holds national arts workshop and sports clinic in Aparri

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas will hold the 6th Summer Arts Workshop and Sports Clinic (SAWC) on May 29-31 at the Cagayan of Aparri in Cagayan.

Participants from all over the country aged 11-16, will take part in the three-day outreach program that focuses on the theme, "Strength, Skill and Ability ... Offerings to Divine Mercy."

Faculty members from UST College of Fine Arts and Design will facilitate the lectures and hands-on application of theories on acrylic and watercolor painting.

A series of training on basketball, volleyball, dancing and social games will also be facilitated by the UST Institute of Physical Education and Athletics.

A Mass will be held every day to foster the holistic development of the participants.

SAWC, organized annually by the UST Public and Alumni Affairs Office, stresses the importance of improving a person's mind, body and soul as expressed in the Dominican philosophy of education.

The 2004 SAWC is sponsored by the UST Research and Environment Foundation, Boysen Paints, Silver Cassell, Intimo Philippines, Nestle Philippines-Confectionery and Absolute Pure Distilled Drinking Water.

The program was first held in 1999 at Saint Louis University's Baguio City Sanctuary, overlooking the scenic midland in 2000 at the Holy Trinity College in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, in 2001 at the Aquinas University in Legazpi City, Albay, in 2002 at the Diocese of Tagbilaran in Bohol, and in 2003 at the Missionary of Work in Bambina.

Summer ceramic art classes for kids

COLOR Me Mine, a point-it-yourself ceramic studio, offers summer classes for boys and girls of all ages, such as "Art Around the World," in which students will learn about the history of ceramic art in Greece, Japan, France, and Mexico; "A Celebration of Mirrors," which will tackle the life and works of Georgia Stotzel, Andy Warhol and Georgia O'Keeffee; and "Ceramic Techniques," which will focus on basic techniques from five-hand drawing to textured brush strokes, and from marbling to bubbles and the use of textured textiles.

Classes on making are also offered, as well as on textile painting, decoupage, glass painting, clay molding, pinpoint, and fused art.

Call any of Color Me Mine's studios: Alabang Shangri-La Mall (8479061), Alabang Town Center (8078828), Greenhills 2 (7074241), and Burkard Power Plaza (7565110).

Saavedra's boredom, Bitancor's anger, and Reyes' insomnia

By Gina Saavedra
Correspondent

THE RECENT works of Carlo Angelo Saavedra show the artist's preoccupation with the seemingly mundane as the source of his creative impetus.

The new series of oil paintings is titled "Boredom," Obelisco Gallery, until May 19. The title follows the contradiction of what the viewer sees and experiences, debunking the notion that boredom is an inept artistic material.

Saavedra has evolved from a restless and volatile mod abuse style works focused on the strange workings of the modern mind, to a modern day illustrator who expands the realm of the subconscious. In this show, the 23-year-old artist has his figures vanish in thick layers of colors, or rather drippings, to then reinvent epic figures in opposition or interlocking landscapes.

Saavedra's dominant colors here become inner landscapes. Chickasaw results from blue and yellow and the thicker shades of the paint are evident.

Again, with a much bigger space to explore, the artist literally goes to town with his unpredictable brand of freedom. Coupled with exuberant drippings and solid brush strokes in the fore, the colors are often made heavenly even by disciples of Abstract Expressionists.

What most intrigue for Saavedra's strongest suite as abstractionist goes beyond the realms of theatrical flamboyance. It is his deep seated innocence for what conventions dictate.

In "The Fifteenth Station," the allusion goes beyond Christ's fixations of the Cross. The number is not as important as what unfolding remains in the artist's imagination: a figure aprostrate, his legs are wide apart, his face in his hands.

There are also the subjects of Saavedra's wild imaginings: a landscape with a yellow brick road; a prelude to a beheading; a lovemaker paddling his way down the rapids. For these pieces, the collective image simulates an expected danger and fear to.

"DREAMING of Angels," by Old Reyes

"WHEELCHAIR Revolution," by John Bitancor

"THE FIFTEENTH Station," by Carlo Saavedra

The artist's works is likewise echoed by "The Nothing Ever a Stranger to the World." The metaphysical point of the work is clearly articulated by the artist, who goes against the grain of modern observation.

Bitancor's social passion

The other artist exhibiting in Avenue Gallery is John Bitancor, erstwhile social realist artist who has visually embraced the surreal light in his new oeuvre, colorful forge of pieces that collectively form a cohesion, enveloped by the style "Bargain."

Like Saavedra, Bitancor has undergone a major transformation, distilling his personal protest against a society impervious to change. But his philosophical bent seems to have taken the better of him.

The pieces are, without doubt, visually engaging. Even their composition in the Baroque mise-en-scène, from the wildly theatrical poses to the messages that lurk in the panoply of images.

The paintings, however, sometimes are too complex and difficult to decipher. From the titles seemingly have clues intended hints. Thus "Scientific Mind" has a solitary human figure clutching a book as the emerges from a forest. "Armchair Revolution" has its subject submerged in a tub while clutching what looks like a book while being pulled by a bubble suffocate.

Bitancor is attempting to express a deep-seated disgust at the revolution ruling a turn for the worse. In an age where democratic movement has been thwarted by its failure to sustain itself in its renewed goal, the act of social freedom still just have to undertake in new metaphysical endeavors.

But with its brave surreal colors, Bitancor's images of a revolution gone haywire may entail some renewed endeavors to be more appealing today.

Old Voices

The recently concluded show of abstractions by artist painter Old Reyes is one bold step the artist has taken in elaborating on his trademark white canvases streaked with colors. From his show last year, where he had the images of cityscapes multiplied many times over, Reyes seems to have found what best suits his fascination with contrast effects.

In "White Nights: Voices of an Insomniac," Reyes plays up the central role of white in the midst of 11 glamorous acrylic on canvas and paper.

But white as color has been thankfully subsumed by the other colors — from red and orange to ochre and gray — seems to reflect the literature mood swings, the fluctuating waves of mind, the inner unpredictabilities engulfing the artist to the creative act.

A disciple of Action Painting as espoused by its American progenitors, Reyes has come into his own in this show. Fusing the best of both worlds, exhibiting the body mind principles of reason and intuition, and grappling with the inner world battling with lack of sleep, Reyes has evolved as a most worthy avatar of mid-life aberration.

This is a modest but really dreaming show, one that moves the spirit and awakens the mind from anger.

E-mail comments to gdomingo@yahoo.com

Three cheers to the 'kesong puti'

THE LATE Mark Anquetin writes of the fact that, traditionally, Filipinos weren't experts in dairy production and production.

This is not surprising as I am told many Filipinos are lactose-intolerant. In terms that you and I are uninterested. He can't digest milk. In more graphic terms, if we drink more than one glass a day, we spend the rest of the afternoon moaning, shall we say, an "unexplosive, if best fits." To be even more graphic... maybe you already got the picture?

I guess the issue here has to do with figuring out whether we developed the intolerance for milk because we didn't produce a lot of milk, or vice versa. This is a chicken-and-egg situation, so should I say cow-and-cream? Fortunately we are in good company. It seems that Chinese entrepreneur resort to hot or milk, either.

Establishing our lactose intolerance, it is no longer expected that we don't quite know when the delicious queseng puti was introduced. It is believed to be by Indonesian of the most important centers of its production is the town of Lumbang in Laguna. Lumbang is also known for its wonderful boodahans, but I'll write about this another time.

The lady who I went to see here with the delicious white delicacy is one of Lumbang's top queso producers, Leonida T. de Jesus. Aling Leony sells the stuff from her house on the banks of the river. The trip here has made to her home is quite close to the Bernard Catholic Church.

Aling Leony learned the art of making queseng puti from her mother, Estifonia Sisenio, who in turn learned it from her mother Bernardo.

Aling Leony was a mother at 19(8 in Sta. Cruz. When she retired in 1999, she felt she had to do something to keep herself occupied. She then decided to revive the family business of cheese-making, which had been left dormant by the death of her sister Fidelita some time back.

The base of a good queseng puti is good carabao's milk. Aling Leony has been delivered to her house daily by the farmers. She manages about one to three pails a day.

ALL4ART

Ben Isabel Jr.

ALING Leony giving her delicious queseng puti to Ina Morato

Cheesy steps

She outlines the following production steps:

1. The milk is first strained through many layers of cheese cloth(s).

2. She mixes in the sensory run-off from the previous batch. To this run-off she has already added a rennet. This rennet will help coagulate the milk. Rennet is made from the lining of the stomach of a calf that has not yet been weaned. At top Leony's local term of this is *Tubay* ants. She notes that other producers use ascorbic acid or vinegar.

3. Once the milk is coagulated, she curds it around with a mixer to break up the mass.

4. The creamy substance goes into small containers which are stored in the refrigerator.

Aling Leony takes great pains to remove as much of the run-off liquid as possible. She says other people prefer their queso somewhat watery. But she has never subscribed to that philosophy. And she reasons that everything is very clean.

The first time I met Aling Leony was on a trip with a friend of mine. This friend had prepared a special treat for us. He had pre-arranged with Aling Leony to serve the not-cold queso with crushed pineapple, cajeta, cashew nuts and syrup. It was heavenly! It was like cheesecake or yoghurt shake. Imagine! The soft-hard queseng puti, bracingly cold, crumbling in your mouth, its creaminess tinged with salt, exploding with the textures and sweet richness of pineapple, cashew and cajeta! I was hooked. We went back many times. On a subsequent trip, we were even served on the terrace facing the river.

In licensing, queseng puti is enjoyed as a meal with freshly baked pandesal. Think of the piping hot bread with the cold cheese!

Interestingly the toppings one eat it as a main dish mixed with onions and tomatoes, served with rice. These count to four if they don't like the fuss of the table. What fancy!

When most people think of queseng puti, they think of its traditional wrapping of banana leaf. Sadly it has become an often quoted sign of the times that one is disappointed, upon opening the leaves, by the smallness of the piece of cheese inside.

Since is one thing that Aling Leony does not compromise. Her queso portions are solid, fat and wonderful! After all, Aling Leony has not forgotten her mother's admonition never to mix any-third rate with quality.

The other thing that Aling Leony likes to relate is that she finds as much fulfillment in making queseng puti because she knows she is continuing her family legacy. Joyfully for all of us, she is passing on this legacy to the younger generation.

She says, "Queseng puti will not make you rich, but it will provide your basic needs in life."

Saying the ice-cold cheese with different sweet cohorts and looking at the ocean over the river, I couldn't agree with her more.

E-mail: bertisabel@yahoo.com; org. ph or address letter to Philippine Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.

"**INNER Peace,**" by Impy Pilapil

Luz, Pilapil and Brumann collaborate in rare show

NATIONAL Artist Arturo Luz, sculptor Impy Pilapil and jeweller Hans Brumann are collaborating in a show at The Pavilion, May 21-June 1. The show is organized by the Embassy of Switzerland under Ambassador Lise Rahre.

Brumann's collaboration efforts with the two celebrated Filipino artists started in 1995 when he first encountered jewelry exhibit with Pilapil at his shop in Legaspi Village and in Shangri-La Hotel in Makati.

A year later, Brumann joined forces with Luz, who is famous for his bird-shaped designs and simple yet elegant lines with subtle but strong qualities.

"In a way, these collaborations keep alive what I think is the most important in jewelry-making, which is the quest for new ideas. I believe that jewelry itself is an art form and can be the miniature of a sculpture," says Brumann, who has been working as a jewelry designer in the Philippines for over three decades.

"The subjects of my artworks vary and the images are mostly of the sweet and nature, symbolizing the essence of life," says Pilapil.

The multi-awarded sculptor will showcase creations in resin, dark marble, glass and stainless steel. Her most notable mural is water, rather merging, splashing, rushing or at rest.

Brumann's impeccable taste and attention to detail go beyond his showroom. With the help of his designer helper, he celebrates the beauty of nature. His creations are meticulously executed in rich combinations of mother-of-pearl, lacewood and sandy cuero wood.

Most notable in Brumann's 12-piece collection is the 170 cm x 100 cm piece called "Metropolis," in mother-of-pearl with natural blister pearls and lacewood.

Said to display for this exhibit is a mini-collection, but to call one a bit-stunning, consisting of 10 pieces in acrylic which will walk viewers through a visual history of things he has seen and places he has been to in over 40 years he has worked as an artist.

"**WILLOW,**" by Hans Brumann

"**METROPOLIS,**" by Brumann

Pandy Aviado's mysterious objects

By Carmencita C. Tojino

COMPLICITY and simplicity can be simultaneously present in a piece of art. And everyday objects can appear mysterious through direct or tangential displacement.

Such paradox can be appreciated in Pandy Aviado's 33 pieces in charcoal, pen and ink on paper, and three pieces in watercolor on paper, in his recent exhibit "Drawings" in Exhibit 6: Juanita at the Arkwalk, 6/F., Bldg. A, JM Hagamel, Mandaluyong City.

Most of his drawings depict a rectangle divided into three rectangles subdivided into rectangular sections where disparate objects are randomly arranged. They could be cabinets, shelves or staghorns.

The artist reveals cherry-sensually printer's homes, the kind the screen emulsion and hardsides of Quiapo are in which to array their wares. He calls them his evidence" "installations," of which he takes photographs that he uses as bases for his drawings.

"I pay close attention to the way these windows place disparate objects—random, full point," he says. "Actually I follow a Renaissance formula in my compositions."

Rigid structure

He is referring to the numerical connection of the Fibonacci sequence, which gave birth to what is variously called "the golden section," "the golden mean," "the golden ratio," "the divine proportion." Incorporated into art and architecture, poetry and music, it is believed to impart beauty, proportion, symmetry and continuous rhythm or movement.

From this mathematical concept was created "the golden rectangle," which has become the basis of composition for artists ranging from Mathematician, Da Vinci and Dürer to Seurat and Mondrian.

"You see that my drawings are 55 cm x 89 cm," Aviado points out. "If 89 is divided by 55, you'd come up with 1.618 [mathematical value of the golden section]. Most of them are based on that proportion. The golden rectangle would fit my space. It would look good on any wall. The only other Filipino painter I know using this proportion was Juyo."

The golden rectangle is said to be one of the most visually satisfying of all geometric forms.

In fact, Aviado's drawings are pleasing to the eyes even if a cataloque of varied objects are in them: jack knife, scissors, paintbrush, keys, bolts, bottles, bullets/fuses, dragonfly seeds, bugs, fossils, Oriental stamps, fotos, pencil, rope, tribal masks, scorpions, seashells, marbles, batons, pistols, glass figurines, solids, human bones, animal parchments, reptilian backbones, arts, flies, baskets, quill feather, tobacco cups, boxes, hairs of Pharaoh and Buddha, bronzes.

Weird imagery

The viewer may look for meaning in the imagery or interpret it to archives of memories, or archives of the world—but that's outcome. If anything, it only shows how divisive it is an emotional collector of objects that's art objects remarks.

As the artist himself has explained, his concerns have a more avant-garde invariably titled "Shelves," with one called "Spring." These drawings are mainly studies in composition.

Even the three watercolor pieces—done in washes of blue, gray, brown, ochre and white, and showing a medley of seashells on strings against the sky and rows of shells and stones on the shore—are titled "Shelves."

Three of the drawings use the picture frame as motif instead of shelves.

"Three Swords and a Boxy-gram" shows an elaborately carved frame containing a fish trout, a wine bottle, a hookah, a sword with an image of a heart pierced by three swords, and a framed picture of a hand encircling from a cloud and holding a globe with a pomegranate.

"Homage to Borie," inspired by a Boris Chopin work, shows an oddly angled image of a compass, looking like a triangle with an ovoid on the tip of an obelisk, contained in a simple frame with elaborately carved scrolls.

"Variation on a Theme by Gaudi," inspired by a Gaudi tiles work, shows a postcard of a museum's gate and façade, a sweeping female nude, a bottle from which emerges like a genie a snail, with reclining on rods of lead. This is seen behind barbed wire.

All the pieces in this exhibit look like pictures of installations. They're done with delicacy and precision, in the graphic style of a master printmaker.

Simplest medium

Aviado was one in the first batch to receive the 13 Artists Awards from the National Center of the Philippines. With a Bachelor in Fine Arts from Philippine Women's University, he completed graduate units in art education at Centro de Huyda Escolar.

He went through specialized training in printmaking at the Contemporary Graphic Arts Workshop under Manuel Ocampo. At the postwar's further printmaking studies at the Instituto Superior de Bellas Artes in Madrid and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.

Favorite artists include Arturo Luz, Gabi Ocampo, Abet Ibleg, Ito Meca, Rembrandt, Paul Klee, Mondrian, Bokasai, Hiroshige, Ma Chi.

Of his young artists, he cites Salvador Ching and Lani Salvador as among the most notable.

He admits drawing is the medium closest to him. "It is the simplest, and the one I really enjoy the most. Well, you make drawing studies before you paint. Sometimes drawing becomes an end in itself."

His "Selected Graphic Works 1980-1998" is ongoing until June 4 in Metro Art Gallery.

For now, Aviado is trying to reach printmaking in the mezzanine through an outreach program of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. "Time it's Mohammed going to the mountain," he says.

"UNTITLED"

"UNTITLED" No. 2

"UNTITLED"

A Taste of Mindanao

Opening tonight: "Mindanao — A Tapestry of Flavors and Colors" at Mandarin Oriental, Manila. 17 to 27 May in the Captain's Hall.

"PAGSAN," the capstone achievement of Ruben Manansalan

Two rival national cinemas hold filmfests

By Cocoy Tejero

THE YEAR 1961 was a watershed year for Italian cinema. It saw the release of three landmark films: Visconti's "Rocco and His Brothers," Antonioni's "L'avventura" and Fellini's "La dolce vita."

That signaled the demise of Italian Neorealism and the coming of the French New Wave. And it spawned a floodgate: the first films of Pasolini, Bertolucci, followed in 1962 by those of Bellocchio, Olmi, the Taviani brothers, Tinto Brass.

A sense of that tremendous new zeal is spoken in the present, could be experienced in this year's Italian Film Festival. There are only nine films offered, but it is a sampling (but couldn't be more significant for Cine-mirabile.

Presented by the Embassy of Italy, the Philippine-Italian Association, and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, this filmfest is unique in it screens only one film a month (until December). It opened on April 27 with its international screening at Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino of the Bilibid classic "La dolce vita."

The following screenings will be held in the CCP Digital Theater. Each film has two screenings (one Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Not to be missed are some great cinematic achievements: Gino Bicocchi's 1994 "Cinema paradiso" (May 18); Ermi Olmi's 2001 "The Tree's Home" (June 15); Antonioni's 1964 "Red Desert" (Sept. 7); Rossellini's 1946 "Paisan" (Oct. 12); Vittorio and Paolo Taviani's 1977 "Padre Padrone" (Nov. 9).

The films are scanned against the decades. From that supreme achievement of Neorealism, "Paisan," through the re-moment's decline, to the revival of Italian cinema in such films as Bertolli's Cannes Palme d'Or winner.

Not to be outdone, the Italians' chief rival for supremacy in European cinema, the French, are holding their own festival in June. As prelude, this month, Alliance Française de Manille is screening the Marcel Pagnol Cycle.

Also called "La trilogie Marseillaise," or more popularly known as "The Marius Trilogy" (hence our genre-shaving) the great Raimu, Orane, Pierre Fresnay and Orane Demazis.

Screened at the Alliance (Ortigas) auditorium are: Alexandre Korda's 1931 "Marius" (last screening last Saturday); Anne Allegret's 1932 "Fanny" (May 18, 6 p.m.); and Pagnol's 1936 "César" (May 22, 2:30 p.m.).

Though these films would look conventional now, they are genuine pioneers—authentic classics that have withstood the vicissitudes of time.

The French Film Festival is one of the most popular foreign filmfests being held in the country. Its program of mainstream movies, prestige productions and art films—many of them award winners—do it with Filipino film enthusiasts and ordinary moviegoers.

We can only wish its programmers would do what the Italians are doing, that is, bring back their old classics and show them on the wide screen, along with the contemporary ones, as it did in the past.

A rationalization may be that these old films are being screened regularly at the Alliance Cinema-Audition room, anyway.

But the screen there is small, and a sweeping film like "Les enfants du paradis" can be better appreciated on a wide screen. And nothing could replace the architectonic cinematography of "The Passion of Joan of Arc," the great best of Maria Falconetti, best a wide, wide screen.

Film and TV workshops with professionals

THE CREATIVE Media Professionals Guild of Asia and the Pacific (CREPAP) with the Film Development Academy of the Philippines will hold the Tagalog Film, Broadcast and Cinema Workshops on May 23-28 at the FAPA in Tagaytay City.

Repeated for the days are, cameraman Jonathan Apolinar Serrano-ning, the workshops are open to professionals and serious students who want to succeed in cinema, television, radio, publications and mass communications.

Robert Tatunay, workshop director, said famous professionals handle the workshops. "These are not theoretical courses. These are experiential courses where everybody actually handle equipment and cinematographers," he said.

Classes and gains for video and television, video as corporate and institutional imaging tool. Hybrid Creative, becoming an effective TV host (Cha-Cha Pajardo Bolilan), scriptwriting for drama (Ma Tarang), directing a training TV station show (Fred Tatunay), cool graphics for television and video (Jay Rodriguez), and digital post-production editing methods (Angie Garcia).

For film courses: against's class directing for film feature (Eddie Romero), running light design for video and film (Boy Vasquez), feature film scriptwriting (Ike Ignacio), production design (Leo Abaya).

For publications and communication: feature publications design and layout (Lysett Villarino); basic wide photography (Jerry Tanedo); corporate communications and crisis media management (Rey Anday); and events planning and management.

Call 921-1911 to 920-936. In Tagaytay, call 5-2063-74.